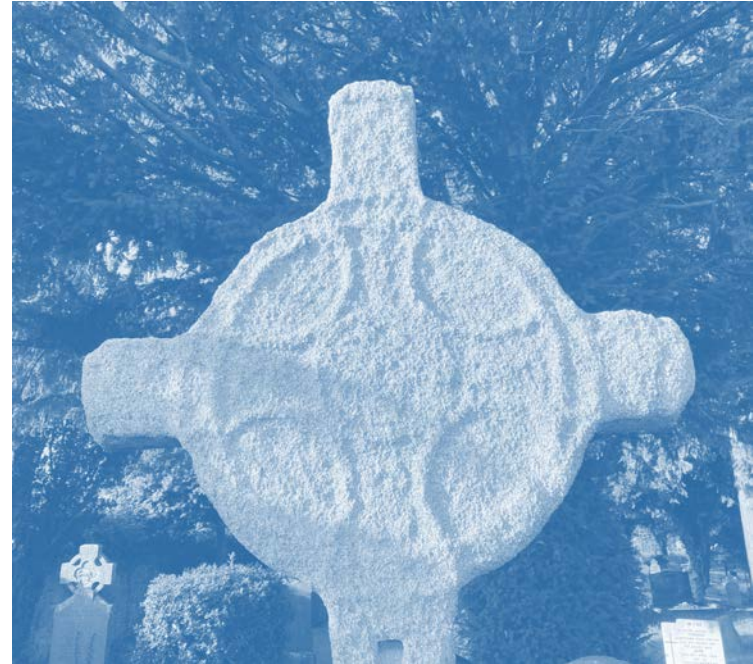


ST CANICE'S ECCLESIASTICAL SITE

FINGLAS, DUBLIN 11

CONSERVATION & MANAGEMENT PLAN

APRIL 2022



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**An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreacht**
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage



Comhairle Cathrach
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 PREAMBLE

This conservation and management plan for St Canice's ecclesiastical site was commissioned by the City Archaeologist of Dublin City Council with support from Parks, Biodiversity & Landscape Services and the Local Area Office. Prepared by 7L Architects in collaboration with Eachtra Heritage, the purpose of the plan is to assess the history, cultural significance, and current condition of the graveyard – its monuments and boundary wall. It assesses the threats to its significance; outlines a conservation strategy and makes recommendations for enhancement, improved management, and interpretation. This plan is drawn up in the context of proposals to conserve the church, mortuary memorials, and the long-term conservation of the medieval high cross. Field surveys were carried out in 2021.

Location	Church Street, Finglas, Dublin 11
Grid Coordinates	713097, 738790
Zoning (adjacent)	Z9 (Z1, Z4, Z15)
Statutory Protection	SMR ref: DU014-066009-; ZAI RPS ref: 1526
Rating	National
Special Interest	Architectural, Archaeological, Spiritual, Historical, Artistic, Social
Principal Dimensions	85 x 45m; 0.34Ha
Inspection Dates	May & August 2021
Prepared by	Fergal Mc Namara & John Tierney
Report Issued	April 2022



1: Aerial view of Finglas with site with graveyard outlined in red.

1.2 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

- During the early medieval period, numerous monastic sites were founded in the immediate hinterland of Dublin Bay to the north and south of the Liffey Estuary.
- This was a rich cultural landscape that preceded its later development as a city, to which these medieval sites survive in placenames and a rich archaeological heritage.

- Finglas, derived from *Fionn Ghlas* or clear water, is associated with Cainnech or St Canice, who by tradition founded a monastery beside a stream at this place in 560 AD.
- By tradition, St Patrick is also associated with Finglas, with a well dedicated to his name close to the church site. It is thought that he resided at Finglas and proclaimed it to be the future capital city.
- In 1649, the army of Oliver Cromwell marching towards Drogheda is thought to have been responsible for toppling of the Nethercross, or that it was taken down and buried deliberately by parishioners to prevent its desecration. Similar accounts relate to stone crosses at Crumlin and Kilgobbin.
- In his diaries, antiquarian Austin Cooper records a visit to Finglas in September 1779, where he encountered an old cross in the graveyard with its top broken off and lying by its base.
- In 1816, tradition has it that the high cross was uncovered at Watery Lane using local knowledge and re-erected in the graveyard by Rev. Robert Walsh. It is possible that it being broken, buried and re-erected are the reasons for its unusual proportions, different stone to its base, and deep channels cuts into its shaft.
- In 1953 Dublin cities boundaries were extended, which included Finglas. It changed from a country village to a Dublin City suburb during the 1950's, the 1960's, the 1970's and continued to develop well into the 1990's.

1.3 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

- The ecclesiastical site at Finglas consists of a medieval church ruin, much-altered over time, set within a bell-shaped graveyard surrounded by a fine collection of mortuary monuments taking a variety of forms.
- Several phases of construction, addition and repair can be seen on the walls of the church and along the boundary wall. Ivy and shrubs have colonised the walls to varying degrees; and have rooted into the wall tops and centre of the wall.
- Of most concern to these walls is the damage caused by tree roots and ivy, some historic, where cracks and bulging can be seen, putting the surviving medieval fabric at risk.
- The graveyard is inaccessible to many with mobility impairments, with steps at both gates. Within the graveyard the path is level.
- For a relatively small graveyard; among the 363 visible monuments there are a wide range of types and many that are of fine quality and of particular historical interest - vaults, pedestal monuments, wall memorials, chest tombs, table tombs, ledger slabs, crosses and headstones.
- While the graveyard is closed to new plots, families retain rights for burials. The graveyard is a repository of funerary art with examples dating to the seventeenth century.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE

- Its gravestones are fine examples of monumental masonry, with hand-lettered inscriptions and vivid iconography memorialising long-deceased individuals, several of whom were born in the seventeenth century.
- Its mature planting includes a fine collection of yews, that appear to have been planted to line a former path. Its vestry books record tree planting from the mid-seventeenth century which add to their interest. It contains a valuable habitat in an urban environment.
- Those who visit the graveyard can enjoy it as a leafy arbour, with a pleasant sense of a 'secret garden', secluded from the urban village, while visiting the graves of ancestors, notable individuals or fine examples of monumental art, within an authentic historic setting.
- As an intact, multi-phased ecclesiastical site of early medieval origins with - a high cross; Viking burial; medieval church and high-status memorials - St Canice's Finglas is undoubtedly a place of Regional Significance. Further research and works to conserve the site may allow it to be considered of National Significance.
- It is also important to acknowledge the significance of those lesser-known people buried at Finglas, whose descendants may seek their memorials out to pay their respects, or search records where burials are no longer marked. Several community initiatives have been undertaken that have reinforced these connections.

1.5 THREATS

- The surviving church ruin, while relatively stable and intact, is at risk from encroaching vegetation as well as the use of hard cement mortars and a lack of maintenance.
- Encroachment of development and vegetation, especially ivy, has caused the loss of parts of the boundary walls to the graveyard, along with displacement of some of the monuments. Mature trees in the graveyard are also displacing nearby monuments, damaging both their stonework and metalwork.
- Other defects, inherent in the materials or their assemblies, are the cause of decay for several the most impressive monuments.
- Being locked and not universally accessible is a barrier. Local interest in the site along in the form of committed and informed volunteers should be supported as far as possible. Local guides could provide the best means of presenting the site during special events, on appointment or at weekends.
- Challenges to accessing the graveyard for people with mobility impairments are not easily addressed. It is important that any proposals to improve access are carefully considered to avoid unacceptable impacts on the built heritage.
- The condition of the Nethercross and medieval church are of most concern. Strategic tree removal and specialist repair works are ongoing to address the risks to safety and preservation. However, without intervention, these monuments will continue to decay.

1.6 POLICIES

- Repairs to historic fabric should be carried out using conservation methodologies that conform to the guiding principles set out in the ICOMOS charters, using appropriate details and materials.
- As the immediate environs of the ecclesiastical site are further developed, its cultural heritage needs to be protected from adverse impacts such as overshadowing or overlooking, poor design and massing detracting from the setting.
- Liaison between the different stakeholders should be fostered to share knowledge and ensure that best practice is adhered to in relation to any proposals for conservation works to the built and natural heritage.

1.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Stabilisation of the boundary walls and removal of damaging trees using best conservation practice should be a priority. This would remove a risk to public safety along the footpaths.
- Several of the monuments have been disturbed so that they are at risk of collapse. Urgent action is required to the monuments close to the stone porch, among the most visible to visitors.
- In 2022, an application should be made for the repair of the chancel and boundary walls under the Community Monuments Fund, Stream 1; these areas are under the most threat.
- In future years, repairs to the nave, side chapel and entrance porch should also be advanced.

- Care should be taken not to disturb the surviving wall plaster during repair works, and pilot works to consolidate these layers should be progressed.
- Vegetative growth should continue to be monitored to avoid further damage, while new planting could enhance the presentation of the graveyard and improve biodiversity.
- Careful tree surgery in the vicinity of the Nethercross is to be advanced in 2022 that will remove the risk of falling branches and improve drying out to the shaded west face.
- A habitat survey of the graveyard should be commissioned with recommendations for their protection and maintenance.
- Studies should be advanced on the modern history of the church and graveyard including its burial records and vestry books dating to the seventeenth century.
- A structural survey should be undertaken of the Nethercross in 2022 to determine what risks to its stability are present due to its present location and its continued deterioration.
- Further consultation and analysis of the Nethercross - regarding its past, present and future - should be advanced. It is essential to continue to engage the public on the findings and actions for its conservation.
- Option analysis has identified the relocation of the high cross into the church where it could be sheltered and a replica placed in its current location as being the preferred conservation strategy.
- Such a project will need several years of planning, design, consultation, approvals and fundraising prior to implementation.



1. Aerial orthoimage of site showing principal features and surviving ruin.

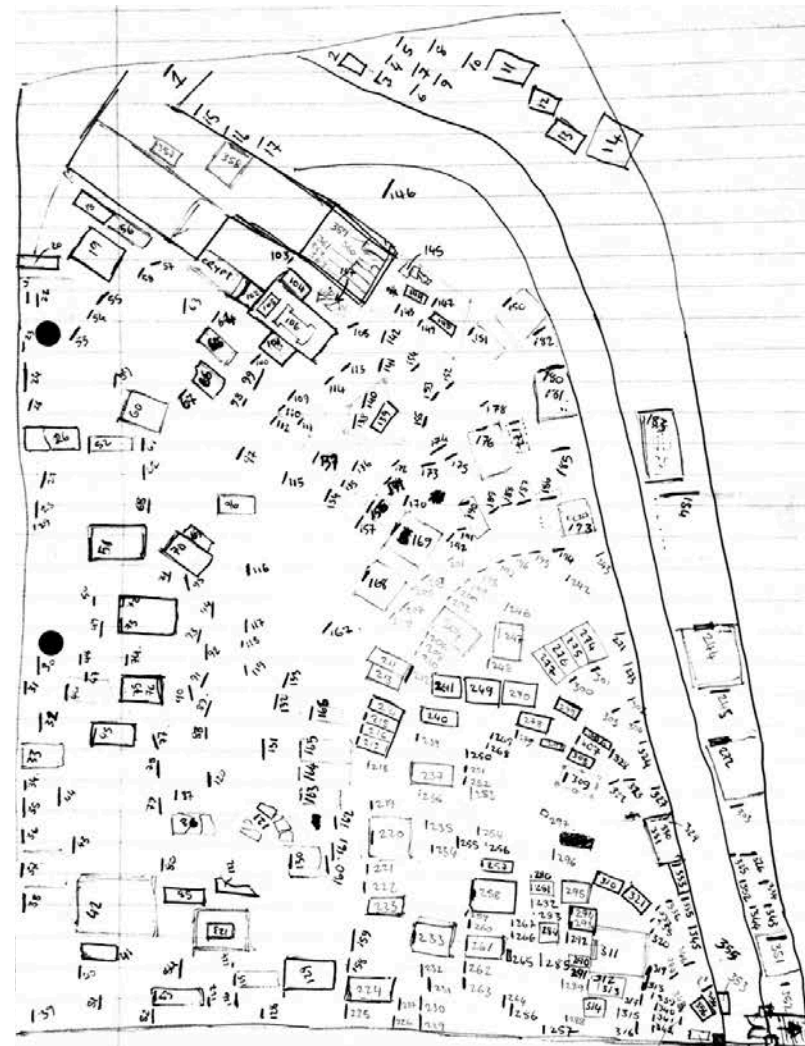
2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 BACKGROUND & METHODOLOGY

The ecclesiastical site of St Canice at Finglas occupies a prominent location in a busy suburban village to the north of Dublin city, approximately five kilometres northwest of its centre. The name *Finglas* is derived from the Gaelic *Fionn Ghlas*, or *clear stream*, after the stream that rises six kilometres to the north near Dunsoghly Castle and flows southwards through the village to join the River Tolka at Glasnevin.

It forms part of a sixth-century ecclesiastical foundation dedicated to St Canice; all that survives from this period is the *Nethercross*, a carved granite high cross that is probably dates to the early tenth century. Today it consists of a medieval church ruin, much-altered over time, set within a bell-shaped graveyard surrounded by a fine collection of mortuary monuments taking a variety of forms. The discovery of a Viking burial in 2004 just outside the the graveyard added another layer of significance to the site.

In 1953 Dublin cities boundaries were extended, which included Finglas. It changed from a country village to a Dublin City suburb during the 1950's, the 1960's, the 1970's and continued to develop well into the 1990's. While it is a well-maintained and secure graveyard, there are issues with encroachment by trees and vegetation on the church, monuments and boundary walls. Some gravestones are in a poor state due to natural weathering over time and would benefit from specialist conservation repair.



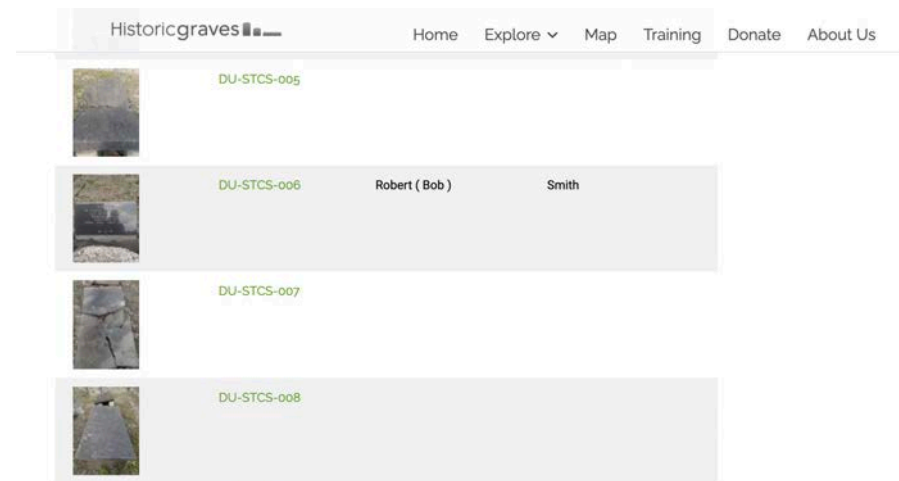
2. Sketch plan prepared by Eachtra Heritage as part of their monument survey.

This conservation management plan was commissioned by the City Archaeologist of Dublin City Council to safeguard the built and natural heritage of the ecclesiastical site. A condition survey was carried out to the church, Nethercross, mortuary monuments and their setting. In recent years, there have been representations to Dublin City Council, the guardians of the graveyard, to undertake works to the church and mortuary monuments in the graveyard. There is also concern about the Nethercross within the local community, given its condition and the possibility that it might need to be relocated.

2.2 AIMS & OBJECTIVES

Essentially, the aim of conservation is to *retain the cultural significance of a place*. Published by ICOMOS in 2013, the revised Burra Charter provides a model for the conservation and management of places of cultural significance; setting out standards and guidelines for its guardians. This group might include owners, managers and custodians, consultants, statutory advisers, opinion-formers, decision makers and contractors.

Places of cultural significance enrich people's lives, often providing a deep and inspirational sense of connection to – family and the community; the landscape; to the past and to lived experiences. A fundamental principle of the Burra Charter is that places of cultural significance should be conserved for the benefit of both present and future generations. The charter defines conservation as - *all of the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance*.



3. Inventory at <https://historicgraves.com/graveyard/st-canices-finglas/du-stcs>

Also of relevance is the Quebec Declaration *On the Preservation of the Spirit of Place*, adopted by ICOMOS in 2008. In the declaration, spirit of place is defined as - *the tangible (buildings, sites, landscapes, routes, objects) and the intangible elements (memories, narratives, written documents, rituals, festivals, traditional knowledge, values, textures, colours, odours, etc.), that is to say the physical and the spiritual elements that give meaning, value, emotion and mystery to place*. For Finglas, this would require seeking to define and conserve the *living, social and spiritual nature* of the graveyard.

As such, the aims of this Conservation Plan are to:

- provide an accurate record of the ecclesiastical site, through field studies and research;
- understand the significance of its cultural heritage both tangible and intangible along with its natural heritage;
- identify any threats to this significance;
- formulate policies to address the threats, and to inform and guide the future preservation and management of the Nethercross, the church, its graveyard and its associated cultural heritage;
- manage change by proposing a sustainable vision for the future of the historic place, to act as a guide for future decision-making;
- identify priorities for the conservation of the graveyard where capital works and ongoing maintenance.

2.3 LIMITATIONS

Areas that were not inspected included those that required special access at high level, were fenced off or locked, buried, obscured by ivy or vegetation. Specific limitations are noted within the text.

2.4 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Steering Group was chaired by City Archaeologist Ruth Johnson, with advice and feedback provided by Michael Carroll Assistant Area Manager and his predecessor Aidan Maher; Christina Todd Landscape Architect; Ludovic Beaumont; Fergus O’Carroll and staff at DCC Parks Operational team; Niamh Kiernan, Architectural Conservation Officer; Larry Dooley and Darragh Cunningham all of Dublin City Council.



4. Methodology for conservation management plans from Burra Charter.

3.0 UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE

3.1 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

The research below was commissioned by DCC under the CMF 2021 fund from Dr Paul McCotter to understand the medieval and late-medieval phases of development at the ecclesiastical site up to the seventeenth century. Some adaptations and additions by the authors have been included.

Early Ireland appears to have had many churches of varying size. The Irish prescriptive material, largely of eighth-century date, suggests a multi-layered hierarchy of churches.¹ At the top was the *civitas* or major church centre with bishop, abbot, *airchinnech* (administrator, normally in minor orders), college of secular married clergy, coenobitic houses of monks and nuns, hospital, hospice, school, several churches and concentric rings of sacred precincts marked by cross inscribed stones, sometimes with lay settlement around its perimeter featuring a market, and extensive landed estates in several sections, usually with the largest block around the *civitas* itself. This is the most visible rank of Irish church.² Various mentions of other ranks of church occur, in particular the *andóit*, often translated as 'mother-church', which was a superior church with certain rights over inferior



6. Medieval parish churches of North County Dublin (OPW).

¹ The principal texts are the 'Ríagal Phátraic', the 'Collectio Canonum Hibernensis', and 'Córus Bésgnai', for which see J.G. O'Keeffe, 'The rule of Patrick' in *Ériu* 1 (1904), 216–24; Hermann Wasserschleben (ed.), *Die irische Kanonensammlung*

(Leipzig, 1885); Liam Breatnach (ed), *Córus Bésgnai: an old Irish law tract on the church and society* (Dublin, 2017).

² See also Tomás Ó Carragáin, *Churches in Early Medieval Ireland* (London, 2010), 9-10.

churches (sometimes called *dalta*, or 'disciple church'), such as that of the appointment of its cleric in certain circumstances, as well as the right to some of their income.³ In the seventh century Tírechán speaks of 'primary churches', while the slightly later Hibernensis speaks of *aeclessia libera* ('free churches') and 'churches called dominicus' (churches bearing the onomastic term *domnach*).⁴ Etchingham's comprehensive treatment of church organization at this period interprets the evidence to indicate a hierarchy of churches, seeing the *domnach* and primary churches as non-episcopal mother-churches occupying the middle rank of a three-tier hierarchy, at the top of which is the episcopal *civitas*.⁵ Under these he places the local churches. Another example he advances is a structure suggested by the ninth-century *vita* of Cartach of Lismore. This refers to churches representing a middle layer of hierarchy, mother-churches under which would have operated something like chapels. Etchingham goes on to demonstrate the usage of the term *paruchia* to refer to the jurisdictional area of both the top and middle layers of this hierarchy.⁶

Finglas is an old name, *Finnplaissi* as recorded in AD 763 in Old Irish. It derives from 'bright or white stream', that which still flows through Finglas to join the Tolka to the south. What is probably the earliest reference to the

name occurs in an early genealogy of the Uí Failgi listing one of their members, Uí Dimai Lecarda, as occupiers of Finglas.⁷ These appear to have been an ecclesiastical family, and at this time – the late sixth century – we note that the territory of the Uí Failgi (which gives its name to baronies located in north western Kildare as well as to the county of Offaly) stretched eastwards much nearer to Dublin than it later would.⁸ This may suggest that the church of Finglas was of sixth century foundation, probably established by Saint Cainneach of Aghaboe as is the tradition.

The annals provide us with most of our early references to Finglas, and may be transcribed as follows:

- 763.2, death of Faelchú, abbot of Finglas.⁹
- 791.1, death of Caínchomrac, bishop of Finglas.
- 796.1, death of Dublinter, bishop and anchorite, of Finglas.
- 812.2, death of Flann, son of Cellach, abbot of Finglas and a bishop.
- 817.12, death of Feargus of Ráith Luraig, abbot of Finglas.
- 825.2, death of Cuimnech, abbot of Finglas.
- 838.1, death of Bran, bishop and scribe of Finglas.
- 867.2, death of Robertach of Finglas, bishop and scribe.

³ Colmán Etchingham, *Church organisation in Ireland AD 650 to 1000* (Maynooth, 1999), 224–37; Richard Sharpe, 'Churches and communities in early medieval Ireland' in John Blair and Richard Sharpe (eds.), *Pastoral Care before the parish* (Leicester, 1992), 93.

⁴ As quoted by Etchingham, *Church organisation* (115–6). See also Donnchadh Ó Corráin, 'Ireland c. 800: aspects of society', 596.

⁵ Etchingham, *Church organisation*, 116, 121–3, 233–4.

⁶ Etchingham, *Church organisation*, 122–3, 144, 168–70, 254.

⁷ M.A. O'Brien (ed.), *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae* (Dublin, 1976), 65.

⁸ Paul MacCotter, *Medieval Ireland: territorial, political and economic divisions* (Dublin, 2008), 174.

⁹ All annual references sourced from the *Annals of Ulster*, Celt edition (<https://celt.ucc.ie//published/T100001A/index.html>), accessed August 5, 2021.

Our next source is the martyrologies. These are lists of saints, their church and their feastday. Later glosses are included.

Martyrology of Tallaght, circa 830:¹⁰

- January 21, Flann son of Laich, abbot of Finglas.
- January 27, Noe of Finglas.
- May 15, Dublinter, abbot of Finglas.
- September 24, Faelchú of Finglas.
- Martyrology of Óengus, circa 830:¹¹
- January 21, Fland, bishop of Finglas.
- May 15, Dublitor, abbot of Finglas Cannig beside Dublin.
- September 24, Faelchú of Finglas.

Martyrology of Gorman, circa 1170:¹²

- January 21, Fland, a bishop in Finglas.
- January 27, Noe of Finglas.
- May 15, Dublitor the good and fair, abbot of Cannech Finglas.
- September 24, Faelchú of Finglas.

The evidence of the martyrologies tells us something of the early history of the church of Finglas. Here the main dedication is that to Cainneach (Canice) of Aghaboe, still remembered in Finglas, and explicitly linked with

Finglas in the martyrologies, as we have seen above. The reference in Óengus to '*Finglas Cannig*' indicates that the belief that Finglas was founded by Cainneach is at least as old as the ninth century. According to his lives, Cainneach was of the *Ciannachta of Glinne Geimin*, that is, northern County Derry.¹³ The cantred just to south of this territory is that of Rathlowry, also the name of an important church here, now shortened to Maghera (*Machaire Ratha Luraigh*).¹⁴ This may explain the presence of Feargus of Ráith Luraig as abbot of Finglas in the early 800s. In addition there is an early reference in an list of Irish saints to a Mochua of Finglas, who seems to share close genealogical ties with Cainneach.¹⁵

It would be normal for major churches such as that of Finglas to have junior churches within its estate. Several ecclesiastical toponyms can be found in Finglas parish, such as *Kildonan*, *Kilreesk* and *Kilshane*. We do not know who Donnán was while Kilreesk refers to the church being in or near a bog. The etymology of Kilshane is unclear but it is the only site to have ecclesiastical remains associated with it.¹⁶ Finally we might note the church of Uachtar Muaíde, associated with a saint Mo Choe. This place can be identified with Broghan in Finglas parish, although no church site is now

¹⁰ R. Irvine and H.J. Lawlor (eds.), *The Martyrology of Tallaght* (HBS 68, 1931).

¹¹ Whitley Stokes (ed.), *The Martyrology of Oengus the Culdee* (London, 1905).

¹² Whitley Stokes (ed.), *The Martyrology of Gorman* (London, 1895).

¹³ P. Ó Riain, *A dictionary of Irish saints* (Dublin, 2011), 138-140. I think it unlikely that Cainneach is a double for Colm Cille.

¹⁴ MacCotter, *Medieval Ireland*, 225-6.

¹⁵ P. Ó Riain (ed.), *Corpus Genealogiarum Sanctorum Hiberniae* (Dublin, 1985), 707.839.

¹⁶ See SMR no. DU014-01201. In Kilshane stands an 18th century church with a medieval font which is believed to stand on the site of a medieval church, there is an associated graveyard and holy well.

known.¹⁷ There were at least two saints of the name, the more prominent being Mo Choe of Nendrum, Co. Down. He is associated with Saint Patrick and is given a Dál Riada pedigree, once again showing a possible association between Finglas and Ulster.¹⁸

The church of Finglas is also associated with the founder of the Celi Dé, Máel Ruáin of Tallaght (which he founded in 774). The Celi Dé originated as a loose ascetic, homiletic and reforming movement rather than any kind of structured group. The late ninth century Triads connect abbot Dublithir of Finglas with Máel Ruáin, calling them both '*the eyes of Ireland*'.¹⁹ Another interesting reference occurs in the Celi Dé text '*The customs of Tallaght*'.²⁰ In this a nun approaches abbot Dublithir asking permission to stay in the nuns quarter (*Less Callech*) in Finglas. Dublithir was angry at this presumption and refused permission. This exchange was overheard by his confessor bishop who intervened and overruled Dublithir and granted the nun permission. This passage is interesting in that it indicates that there was a convent of nuns as part of the church establishment of Finglas circa 800 and, when taken with some of the annal entries above, indicate that Finglas may have been the seat of a bishopric. It is of interest to note that the only two episcopal seats we find at this period in Dublin north of the Liffey are those of Lusk and Finglas. The status of the church of Finglas is further revealed by the annal of 780.12 (AU) which shows abbot Dublithir chairing a

peace conference in Tara between the two main competing overlords of the time, the Uí Néill and the Laigin.

Perhaps the earliest surviving material indicator of Finglas' erstwhile importance is its early stone cross. While now in the churchyard in Finglas this was not its original position, which is said to have been somewhere on Watery Lane north of the church.²¹ This is of little value as an indicator of location as it runs northwards from Finglas village, and its original siting is unknown. Was this perhaps in the small townland of Glebe, lying at the end of the lane? Some indication of this is found in the story of the cross. This states that upon Cromwell's arrival in Dublin the cross was dismantled and buried to prevent it from desecration. A local clergyman, Robert Walsh, who was vicar of Finglas in the early 1800s, discovered an old man who told this family story as handed down to him. His grandfather, when a boy, had been present at the burial of the cross in a corner of one of the 'Glebe fields'. Dr. Walsh proceeded with some workmen to the spot indicated in this traditional story. In due time he unearthed the cross from its resting place of 160 years, and had it erected in the southeast corner of the ancient churchyard where it now stands.

As pointed out by Maighr ad N  Mhurchadha, several parish church sites in Dublin share this story of Cromwell's forces necessitating the removal or burying of valuables or revered objects or effigies including stone crosses.

¹⁷ C. McNeill (ed.), *Calendar of Archbishop Alen's Register* (Dublin, 1950), 24, 173, 213.

¹⁸ <https://www.dib.ie/biography/mochoe-mochaoi-mahee-coelan-a5846>, accessed August 12, 2021.

¹⁹ K. Meyer (ed.), *The Triads of Ireland* (Todd Lecture Series, Dublin, 1906), 2.

²⁰ C. Harrington, *Women in a Celtic church* (Oxford, 2002), 108-9.

²¹ W. Joyce, *The neighbourhood of Dublin* (Dublin, 1921), 268-9.

She also notes that Austin Cooper, antiquarian, paid a visit to Finglas in September 1779, and found an old stone cross, the top of which was broken with its top lying under its base. He goes on to describe how Roman Catholics in the area prayed at the cross during funerals.

The small (six acre) townland of Glebe lies approximately two kilometres north of Finglas church. Today it is urbanized as McKelvey Road and Avenue and is bounded on the east by St. Margaret's Road. It will be noted that this is some distance north of the ecclesiastical enclosure at Finglas (see below). Is it possible that the original location of the Finglas cross marked an entrance to a large outer enclosure? This seems unlikely as it would be much larger than such enclosures typically are.

We see that the annals quoted above cover the period 763 to 867. The late start date may simply be due to lacunae in the records but the relatively early end date is suspicious, especially given the virtually continuous annalistic coverage given to neighbouring foundations to the north, such as Lusk and Swords. Significantly, *Cogadh Gaedhill re Gaill*, which contains accurate annalistic material, mentions the plunder of 'Finnglas Cainnigh' by the Vikings circa 851.²² One must suspect that the proximity of Finglas to Viking Duibhlinn had some negative effect on its existence, at least in the earlier Viking period.

²² J.H. Todd (ed.), *Cogadh Gaedhill re Gaill* (London, 1867), lxi, 2, 19.

The discovery of a Viking burial in June 2004 by archaeologist Dr John Kavanagh just outside the current west wall of the graveyard provides evidence of their presence at Finglas and at the monastic site. A shallow grave contained the remains of a 25 – 30 year old aristocratic Norwegian woman buried in full dress. The lower portion of the remains included the left humerus and lower legs that had been truncated from earlier sewage works. Several artefacts were discovered with the remains including a bronze object, antler/ bone comb and a brooch. The brooch made of a copper alloy gilded in gold and silver believed to have been from Norway or Sweden. The brooch was the first to be discovered in Ireland since 1902 and is in the care of the National Museum of Ireland.

The evidence of the martyrologies however suggests that the church must have been re-founded at some stage and was certainly in operation again by the mid-twelfth century. In 1170 troops of Anglo-Norman archers were quartered in the church, again suggesting that there were significant buildings in Finglas at that time.²³ Perhaps this church featured the dressed granite that can be found on the north gable. It is not certain whether the older church and *sanctum* of the ecclesiastical site was located precisely where the church and graveyard site are found today. Another possibility would be the grounds of the nineteenth century church across the street.

The church of Finglas seems to have been one which occupied the top layer of church organization, a *civitas* church with resident bishops. Accordingly its population would have been diverse featuring senior clergy, including

²³ F. Elrington Ball, *A History of the County of Dublin, ect.*, volume six, (Dublin, 1920), 84; A.B. Scott and F.X. Martin (eds.), *Expugnatio Hibernica* by Giraldus Cambrensis (Dublin, 1978), 96.

bishops, abbots, *airchinnigh* (lay administrators in minor orders), educators, scholars, anchorites and others. While some of these were celibate most were not. There would have been sub-groups of celibate priests, nuns, monks and anchorites (hermits). A large proportion of the clerical population would have consisted of *manaig* (*manach* = monk), a term which covered several layers of tenants and farmers on the extensive church lands. Aside from the celibates most of the clerical population occupied hereditary roles. Unfortunately, we know little of this thriving native Irish population of Finglas. We know something of the pre-Norman ecclesiastical structure of Fingal, and it seems clear that in this structure Finglas ruled (received a rent and appointed clergy) over several inferior churches. We know this to be the case with the church of Artane, but it must have pertained to several others as well around the Tolka valley. There is some evidence to suggest that the parishes of Ward and St. Margaret's may also have been subservient to Finglas.²⁴ Finglas thus ranked in status with other senior local churches such as Lusk, Swords and Clonmethan. Like them Finglas was surrounded by a curved ecclesiastical enclosure of early date.²⁵

²⁴ Ball, History of the County of Dublin, 116; Alen's Register, 33.

²⁵ This ran from a southern point south of the graveyard along the east side of the Green, then along 'King William's Rampart' to a high point north of Ashgrove House, back down to Ballygall Lane, then following the curved road pattern passing the Catholic church and then Barrack Street and so back to the beginning. Swan believed that the western segment contained a market. See Crowley, Clare (2009), The Origin of the Curvilinear Plan-Form in Irish Ecclesiastical Sites: A Comparative

The arrival of the Anglo-Normans changed everything. Finglas was erected into an Anglo-Norman manor and became in most things just another manor tenure typical of the period. The income from the manor largely went to the archbishop of Dublin while the tithes went to the prebend of the chancellor.²⁶ The native population, or at least the upper echelons were removed or relegated to cottier and *betagh* tenure, essentially small holders holding at will, sometimes by labour service rather than a cash rent or by a mixture of both.²⁷ Unfortunately the names of such tenants are not recorded but we do have the names of the higher tenants, the freeholders, none of which are native Irish.²⁸ We do have one reference to *betaghs* farming the townlands of Ballygall, Kildonan and Kilshane, and these may well be natives. There is a reference from Finglas in the mid-fourteenth century of a court case where 'farmers' (usually tenants by leasehold) in the manor, all of whom bore Irish surnames, complained of having to pay a much higher rent for their lands than the burgesses did. All of these had Irish names.²⁹

The manor was administered by a paid official, the *seneschal* or *serjeant*, who presided over the manor court in the absence of the archbishop, dealing with tenurial and civil cases. This court operated from a dedicated

Analysis of Sites in Ireland, Wales and France. Technological University Dublin. doi:10.21427/D7N304.

²⁶ Alen's Register, 42 and passim.

²⁷ Alen's Register, 173, 212-13.

²⁸ Alen's Register, 173-4, 212-13.

²⁹ Ball, History of the County of Dublin, 86.

manor court building, recorded in 1656 as the *Old Court*, lying somewhere in Finglas village.³⁰ There is a reference from the 1260s to the court as lying 'at the cross of Finglas' and so along or near Church Street. This reference probably refers to a crossroads but possibly to a stone market cross.³¹ The archbishop would reside in this building when his iterations brought him to Finglas. The site is perhaps to be identified by the later building known as 'The Court' in the church grounds of Finglas. There also appears to have been an incorporated borough at Finglas, with a burgagery whose extent is not known, but which would certainly have been smaller than the manor. This would have been inhabited by a fixed number of burgesses paying an annual rent and with certain 'liberties', such as the right to be judged by their peers and not the overlord. There were nineteen burgesses at Finglas in Archbishop Luke's time (1230 to 1255).³² There are also records of a park, by which we might envisage a walled hunting garden, but its location is unclear.³³ There is an interesting reference to the Court in 1349, upon the death of archbishop Alexander de Bicknor. In that year mention is made of the stone walls of the court having been broken by evil doers, and that leaden gutters, iron bars from windows, and clamps and bolts from its doors had been stolen. It goes on to reference that the kitchen and brew house contained furnaces and vessels of brass and lead, and mentions a deer park and a rabbit warren, in which pheasants and partridges, as well as hares

and rabbits, were preserved.³⁴ The deer park was still known, at least as a denomination, in the 1590s.

Given its proximity to Dublin the episcopal residence and Court at Finglas were popular with the archbishops. Archbishop Fulk died while a resident in Finglas, in 1271, as did a later archbishop, Walter Fitzsimons, in 1511.³⁵ During the remainder of the sixteenth century the Court was leased out to various laymen, and in 1547 was the residence of the rector of Finglas. By 1656 the Court was described as 'a house built of stone, having attached to it a malt-house, kiln, and five tenements, as well as a garden, an orchard, and thirty acres of land', when leased by the archbishop to a layman.³⁶ The old church of Finglas was rebuilt in 1657 but was abandoned in favour of a new church in 1843.³⁷ This phase of rebuilding may have included a new entrance porch and alterations to the ogee windows that may have been installed in the fifteenth century, along with a side chapel with an arcade to the main nave.

Turning to the question of the extent of the archiepiscopal manor of Finglas, the land possessions of the pre-invasion Irish Church descended largely intact to the church of the Anglo-Norman period. This inheritance was recognized in the shape of the lands of the various *counties of the Cross*, and these lands enjoyed their own administration. In most cases it also appears that parochial boundaries inherited such borders and that the

³⁰ R. Simington (ed.), *The Civil Survey volume vii, County of Dublin* (IMC, Dublin, 1945), 140.

³¹ *Alen's Register*, 143.

³² *Alen's Register*, 85.

³³ *Alen's Register*, 173.

³⁴ Ball, *History of the County of Dublin*, 84-85.

³⁵ Ball, *History of the County of Dublin*, 85-87.

³⁶ Ball, *History of the County of Dublin*, 91.

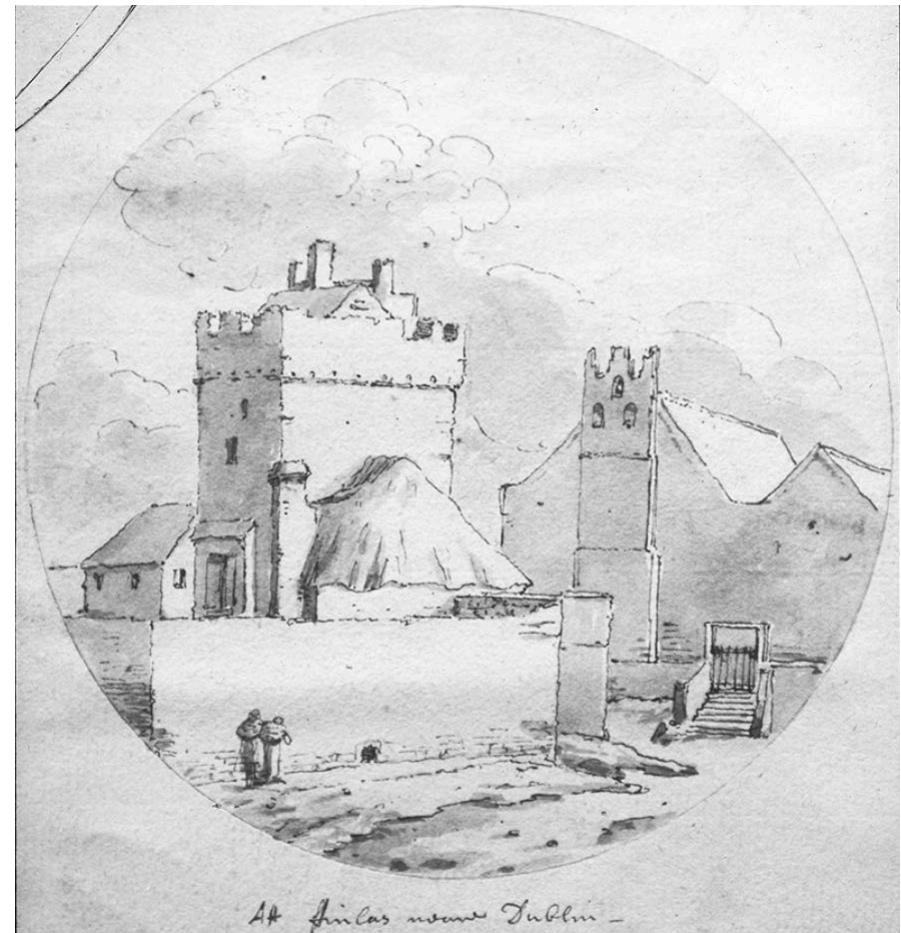
³⁷ Ball, *History of the County of Dublin*, 119.

area of the parish reflected that of the earlier church estates. Finglas was no exception to such a rule. We possess detailed records of the lands of the parish from a rental of 1326, which is supplemented by other contemporary records.³⁸ A thorough evaluation of these lands, including those with obsolete placenames, confirms that the area of the parish of Finglas as recorded by the Ordnance Survey of the 1830s and 1840s is almost the same as the area of the parish as recorded in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. This is true even where lands were lost to the church of Finglas during the late medieval period. In this context we know that Jamestown and Cruiserath had been lost to the church sometime before 1529 but remained part of the parish.³⁹ By 1641 we find the tithes of the parish going mostly to its parson (rector) and a chief or head rent being paid from most townlands to Trinity College, this having earlier been paid to the archbishopric. At this time the archdiocese retained in its own possession a demesne located approximately in or partly in the modern townlands of Finglas West, Finglas East, Kilshane, Kildonan, Kerdiffscastle and Tolka. Some of these lands were still owned by the archbishopric in the 1830s.⁴⁰

* * * * *

Parish churches of the medieval period are their own distinct category of ecclesiastical building; however, they do share many of the characteristics of churches built by mendicant orders. While the Anglo Normans had a large influence in the formation of dioceses and parishes, these structures

³⁸ The rental of 1326 can be found in Alen's Register, 173-75, but there are numerous other references to the lands of Finglas in this volume.



7. View of Finglas church in 1698 by Frederick Place. Note bell cote and location of entrance gate. No window shown on north gables.

³⁹ Ball, History of the County of Dublin, 87.

⁴⁰ Ball, History of the County of Dublin, 88.

were already emerging in the early twelfth century. There are examples of earlier churches built to serve parishes which were not associated with monasticism rather the new secular clergy which began to emerge prior to the arrival of the Anglo Normans. Many of these churches were built on existing monastic sites, replacing earlier timber structures or simpler stone buildings. By the thirteenth century, mendicant orders sometimes absorbed existing parish churches into their religious houses. They were also absorbed to serve new diocesan structures, sometimes being updated, or refurbished by the Anglo Normans.



8. Extract from Roque's map of County Dublin 1750.

Given the ancient origins of the site, the curved boundary alignment along Church Street is possibly over one thousand years old, although the existing stone wall has yet to be dated and is more likely to have been built more recently on ancient foundations. Most Irish graveyards were enclosed with stone walls during the nineteenth century. References to the construction or upkeep of the boundary wall might be identified in the vestry books boundary wall at Finglas and may provide some insight into its antiquity or otherwise.

The construction of a new Church of St Canice across Church Street designed in a simple Gothic style by Frederick Darley in 1841, led to the abandonment of the church while burials continued in the churchyard. Wall memorials in the interior were taken into the new church, which also featured a bellcote. Slowly, the medieval church lost its roof and windows, stone may have been taken from the site as it deteriorated.

Today, the graveyard measures 85m x 45 m on a NW-SE axis, and is enclosed by substantial, high walls on all sides. Some of the eastern wall collapsed during the construction of the adjacent Fuelyard Apartments in the 2000s, exposing burials. A boundary retaining wall has been reinstated. Over the course of the last three hundred years, there have been some notable individuals interred in the graveyard who were prominent in civic and cultural life. The interior of the graveyard has a fine collection of eighteen- and nineteenth-century headstones, apparently in their primary locations. However, at least two elaborate wall memorials were relocated to the newer church after 1843. There are approximately three hundred and sixty monuments comprising simple grave markers; headstones; recumbent slabs; table tombs; box tombs; pedestals; an obelisk as well as a mural

tablet recorded. Crosses and ringed crosses/Celtic crosses are also to be found with an interesting example of an early Celtic Revival high cross from 1825 for John Lanigan a noted ecclesiastical historian; simple upright headstone slab predominate - some with simple sinuous tops; others with bedstead-type 'shoulders'. There is a mixture of iconography in the graveyard reflecting the dual denominations buried here.

Earlier phases of restoration works were carried out by Dublin Corporation since they took possession of the church and graveyard in the 1950s. While the use of hard cement and cutting down of corroded railings would not be conservation practice today, there is little doubt that these initiatives



9. Watercolour of church in 1878 By JE Carson showing roof timbers surviving, render shedding and windows missing.



10. View of present Church of St Canice, Finglas.

helped to preserve many of the monuments, and perhaps the church also. The graveyard is notable for its well-maintained grounds, and lack of obvious anti-social behavior that secluded, urban graveyards sometimes attract. This is in large part due to the arrangement with the Lynch family over several generations.



11. Sketch of Barrack Lane by GV Du Noyer in 1841 showing east gable in the background.



12. Layout of graveyard from topographic survey showing monument numbers.



13. Aerial orthoimage of church and immediate environs undertaken by Dr Paul Naessens of Western Aerial Surveys.

4.0 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

The descriptions below are based on inspections carried out in August & September 2021. The following survey concentrates on the condition of the fabric of the church, high cross, monuments, and boundary wall. The purpose of the survey is to identify defects and recommend outline repairs to improve the condition and presentation of the structures.

4.1 SETTING

The graveyard is located along Church Street and was at the centre of Finglas village until the road was upgraded in the 1990s to link into the M3 motorway. It has always been one of the principal radial routes from the city centre, heading northwards.

4.2 BOUNDARY WALL

The boundary walls to the graveyard form a bell-shaped enclosure of approximately 0.34Ha, with a NW-SE axis, with a distinct curve along the Church Street to the north and following long-established plot boundaries on the other sides. In total, the wall is almost 250m in length. It is primarily constructed of limestone Calp, a common building material on historic buildings in Dublin. At the southern end, the wall sits on a terrace that is held by a concrete block retaining wall along Wellmount Road. On the north end it varies up to approximately 2m high. To the interior, the wall height varies between 1-2 metres. Several phases of construction, addition and repair can be clearly seen to sections of the wall.



14. View of entrance gate from underneath bridge showing extent of ivy.

Ivy has colonised the wall to varying degrees; in some areas, the ivy is confined to the surface, and poses little threat to the condition of the wall. In other areas, the ivy is more extensive, and has likely rooted into the wall tops and centre of the wall, while adding additional weight and 'windage' to the wall making it more prone to collapse. It is heaviest on the north and south walls to the extent that it poses risk of falling stone along the footpath on Church Street. While it is patchy along the west wall and a long stretch of the eastern wall is completely clear, this is due to rebuilding in recent decades. Along the east side, the collapse was caused by construction on



15. View along curved boundary wall to interior showing railings to wall top.

the adjacent Fuel Yard site which caused the exposure of human burials and its reconstruction. Historic sections of this wall have been buttressed, and the internal faces rendered with cement and given a concrete capping.

There is extensive repointing in hard cement which can cause the softer limestone to erode sacrificially. Most of the walls have a heavy concrete capping which is breaking down in places, however much of the north, south and west flanks are completely covered in ivy so it was not possible to make a full assessment. Along Church Street, a mild steel palisade has

been erected to prevent unauthorised access. Of most concern around the wall is the damage caused by tree roots, some historic, where large cracks and bulging can be seen. Wherever possible, trees with branches or roots that bear onto the walls should be removed or pollarded as appropriate. The buried and embedded roots take time to die off and shrink.

4.3 ENTRANCE GATES

The Barrack Lane entrance gate is wrought iron dating from the nineteenth century, surmounted by a small iron ringed cross. It has retained its lockcase and would benefit from adjustment and redecoration. The gate at Church Street is a replica of that gate in mild steel. It is part of an initiative in recent years to reopen this historic entrance, improving permeability and accessibility.

4.4 PATHS & LANDSCAPING

St Canice's graveyard is well-maintained and secure, with mature trees, making it a pleasant place to visit at a remove from the busy roads and suburban streets. Both entrances involve steps up onto the level of the graveyard, which is otherwise quite flat. External levels are about 1m at the north gate onto Church Street and 2.5m over at Wellmount Road/ Barrack Street. There is less than a metre in level change across the site, generally higher towards the west boundary wall.



16. View along curved boundary wall from entrance gate off Church Street.



17. View along west boundary wall showing proximity of yew tree.



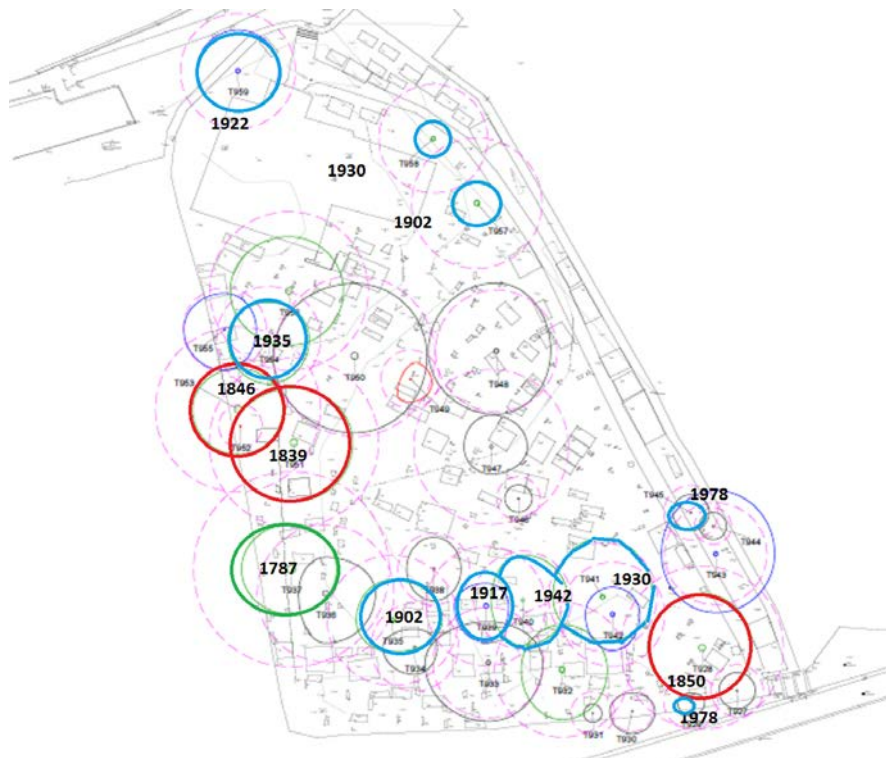
18. Large cracks and bulging to boundary wall along footpath.



19. View of Fuel Yard Apartments and rebuilt wall section.



20. View from outside of east wall showing new buttresses.



21. Analysis by L. Beaumont on tree survey showing possible dates of trees.

Five concrete steps are set behind the entrance gates so that the graveyard is not accessible to those with mobility impairments. Within the graveyard the paths are generally gently sloping other than a steeper section leading from the eastern wall to the centre. Access around the graveyard is along a circuitous pea gravel path that varies between 1m and 3m in width. This

surface is suitable for wheelchairs, although the graveyard itself is inaccessible due to the steps at both entrance gates.

The current path layout has been in existence for at least one hundred years, and the distribution of trees and mortuary monuments suggest that there was another path leading towards the side chapel of the church from the Barrack Lane gate, parallel to the south and west boundary walls. The current path surface consists of resin bound gravel which needs repair or replacement.

The western and southern ends are well-shaded by mature trees of mixed species, the central area and east side is relatively clear and sunny. There is a predominance of yew trees, both native Irish yews and the more decorative, column-like *fastigiata* variety. The trees filter out traffic noise from the busy road and provide for a range of ambiances of light and shade while marking the seasons.



22. West side of high cross looking east towards Finglas village centre.

4.5 NETHERCROSS

We are grateful to John Meneely of Queens University for the recording of the high cross and insights into the geology and stone condition. We also refer to the condition report prepared by Carrig Conservation in association with the late Professor George Sevastopolu.

The Nethercross at Finglas stands just over 3m tall and is the sole surviving high cross in Dublin. It consists of three components in a simple assembly of - head and neck (1) connected to a short shaft (2) and sitting on a large

rhomboid base (3) - sitting on a plinth of a mixture of rubble and cement coated with limewash. It is not believed to be in its primary location - accounts of it being retrieved from outside the graveyard in 1816 appear to contradict another reference to a stone cross in the graveyard in 1779.

It is made from Leinster granite and is likely to be a composite cross with the base being finer grained and greyer in colour to the coarse-grained shaft and head. It is also likely to have lost parts of its shaft, like the re-erected granite high cross at Moone, Co Kildare. Today with a relatively stunted appearance and proportion and may once have stood more than 4m in height. Sitting on the rubble plinth, it has a tilt angle of approximately 2 degrees towards the footpath (east) side. The narrow neck does not look sufficient to support the large, monolithic head; like most other granite crosses it has a closed rather than an open ring. We do not know how it is jointed; other stone crosses have tenon joints.

The coarse mineral grains of the shaft and head are easily displaced by brushing fingers across any of the stone faces. Rainwater and frost are the constant source of the stone grains that continue to be found at the base. Weathering and oxidation lead to chemical reactions among the mineral components of the stone that convert feldspar and mica into clays, thereby destabilizing the surface leading to degradation.

In the longer term the remaining surface detail of the high cross will be lost, the stone will lose dimension and become unstable leading to cracking and collapse. As the cross is top heavy, this might occur sooner than might be anticipated, its tilt angle and irregular bedding contributing to this uncertainty.

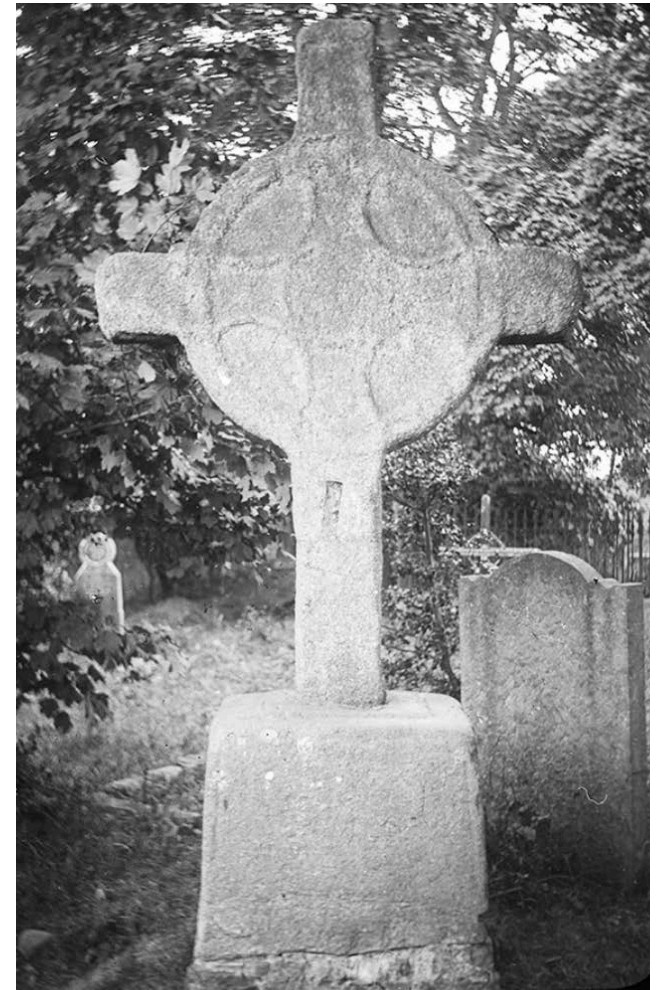


Fig.s 23-25: Sketch of cross by GV Du Noyer (1840) and historic photographs of the west and east side of the cross (ca.1900). Note sunlight on west face, and flash needed for east, which is the opposite of today, and down to maturing and lost trees.

Aside from the weathering, damage to the stone can be perceived on its surface due to impacts, most likely fallen branches, but also from its (possible) burial and re-erection. Another possibility would be a deliberate chipping away at the stone as relics or votive objects. When first constructed, the cross would likely have had a crisper, more detailed appearance as found at Moone. Significant losses can be seen on the exposed terminals of the cross, and along the edges. The profile of the shaft is no longer straight where it has been gradually whittled away. Its joints are filled with lead, a traditional method; however, some cement was used to the junction of the base and shaft, which caused damage when it became detached.

It has been recorded in close its present condition and appearance since the early nineteenth century. In 1840 Georges Victor Du Noyer, a noted antiquarian and artist, depicted detail and carving not readily discernible today but may be the result of careful observation and interpretation. Carved knotwork motifs can be seen, along with rope edges, with the top and underside of the ring being much more decorative. There are conflicting accounts from nineteenth century sources regarding the precise location of the Nethercross in the graveyard. Walsh writing in 1888 has it in its present location, while only ten years later Berry in a paper to the Royal Society of Antiquaries mentions it as being in the northeast. Historic map evidence would appear to confirm the current southeast location. Interestingly, the high cross is shown as a pictogram on the first edition OS map of 1840.



26 & 27. Extracts from 19.c. OS maps. Note pictogram of stone cross.

Photographs held in the National Library dating from ca.1900 show how it had largely retained its appearance, having possibly lost detail over the 80-90 years since its re-erection. The photographs demonstrate how the cross is more shaded now given the maturity of the yew tree. Being slower to dry out has allowed a green biofilm to colonize the rear (west) face of the cross. It is unlikely that this creates additional impacts, other than the increased likelihood of a fallen branch. The condition of the Nethercross has been the cause of ongoing concern, and several initiatives have been undertaken by the City Archaeologist to come to an understanding about the threats to its preservation. Laser scans were undertaken in 2011 and 2017, and work is ongoing to compare these with a laser scan produced for this report. This may provide insights into the rate of decay, but there is little doubt that this process is active, variable, unavoidable and will be accelerated by climate change.



28. View of east face in raking light showing ringed cross design.



29. Detail of strapwork to underside of ring, S. side.



30. Detail of base showing algal growth and granite grains.



31. Slot to east side.



32. View of cross from NE.

4.5 CHURCH PHASING

This analysis was undertaken from site observations by Dave Pollock MIAI, along with explanatory sketches. Some adaptations and additions by the authors have been included.

The church is in relatively good condition, roofless but with standing walls on all sides virtually intact. Alterations to the roof can be seen in most of the gables. Most of the windows have been altered in the eighteenth or nineteenth century, and the aisle and porch are clearly additions to the main building. Although the site has been recorded since the early medieval period, there is no surviving Romanesque or earlier structure obvious in the standing building.

The present church was probably first built as two chambers, a wide nave and a slightly narrower chancel. Surprisingly the present chancel arch, separating the two, is an alteration, and was inserted at some stage after both the nave and chancel were standing. The present chancel arch must have replaced a smaller original.

The east end of the chancel retains fragments of internal sandstone mouldings which may have met over an east window or may have been part of an arrangement over two or more lancets. A Du Noyer sketch from 1840 shows the east gable from outside, with a central traceried window. However, he may have recorded one of the late windows, with distinctive brick arches, found on all sides of the present building. These late windows may well have been installed before 1840, and may have had wooden or cast-iron tracery, which at a distance can appear quite like stonework.

The inside face of the north wall of the chancel was largely obscured by ivy until this summer when it was cleared by a volunteer work party. Aside from the large visible opening, it has exposed two large window openings, in vulnerable condition, that are infilled and not immediately visible externally. The opposite wall also has two distinctive original window embrasures, one infilled and the other modified, with a late window. The embrasures are topped with hammer dressed segmental arches, and the dressing continues down the sides. Part of a window frame survives on the outside of the blocked embrasure, and this includes half of a sandstone cusped ogee top and jambs.

Between these two original windows, on the inside, there is a recess or window, cut into the wall and later blocked. The outside of the wall is partly masked by ivy here, but has certainly been disturbed, perhaps for a window. The outside of the north wall is largely free of ivy, and shows two blocked windows, and a third modified for a late window. One of the blocked windows is probably original, the other an insert.

An interesting feature of this length of wall is a course of masonry towards the base, with rectangular blocks laid on end, with occasional vertical spacers between. A similar course can be seen on the inside of the east gable, again towards the base. The overlying rubble walling is bedded properly and appears to be essentially contemporary. The blocks on end may have been inspired by early masonry (Cyclopean) at another site, or by a building at Finglas which has subsequently been lost. Part of the nave has been quarried away for the arcade arches and the aisle to the south.



33. View of west gables of church from Church Street.



34. View of south side of chancel and east gable of side chapel.



35. North wall of chancel at junction with nave.



36. North wall of nave and entrance porch.



37. View of south wall of side chapel.

Inside the building the original wall on the south side is represented by a bulge in the wall towards the east end, and by stonework over the arcade. The north wall of the nave had only one window, towards the east end. The original appears to have been very tall but was totally removed and replaced by a window with a sandstone arch and jamb moulding, which in turn was replaced by the present late window, with a brick arch. There is no indication of another window in the north wall, only a door.

A heavy single storey porch with a vaulted stone roof, is attached outside the door. The vault lacks wicker centring, suggesting postmedieval work, and a plain round-headed doorway but no brickwork, suggesting the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century.

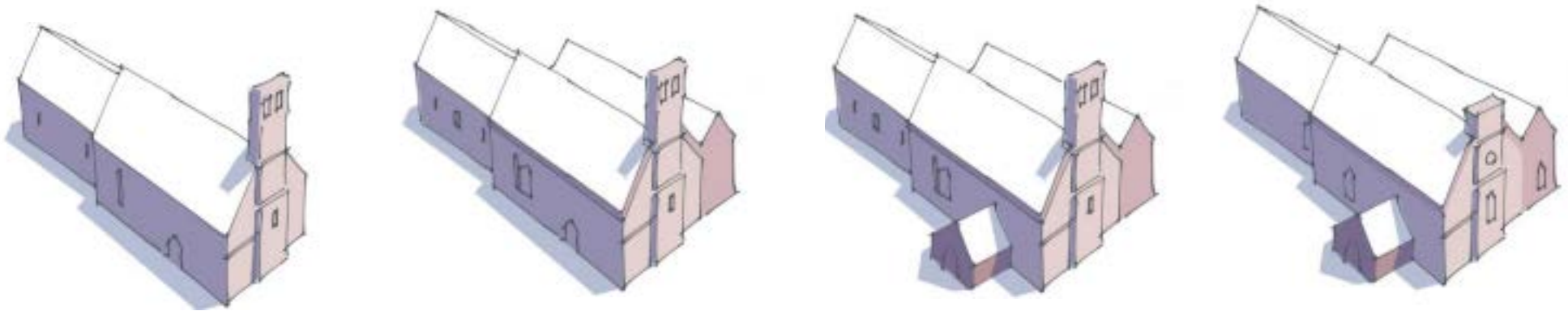
The west gable of the nave includes a central thickening or buttress associated with a bellcote. This thickening appears to be original to the building, but a central circular window has been quarried in later, and a small window below has been enlarged, probably in the eighteenth century as it is not apparent in the 1698 view.

A string course is visible to the gable north of the thickening, but not to the south. Two rectangular granite blocks survive at the original southwest corner of the building, and others at the corner may have been removed when the aisle or chapel was grafted on. A few granite blocks can be seen in the thickening, and a few in the much younger porch, but there were none on the northwest corner. The blocks were probably recycled from an older building when the nave was built.

Stonework on the inside of the aisle or chapel is largely obscured by surviving plaster, but the outside stonework is mostly visible. As with the

north wall of the nave, there appears to have been only one window, towards the east end. This has been rebuilt with a brick arch in the late eighteenth or nineteenth century. A blocked doorway appears to be original to the chapel and breaks in the rubble coursing to each side of the door probably representing interrupted construction rather than alteration. Similar interruptions towards the east end of the wall suggest the east gable was built ahead of the south side.

It is difficult to be certain about dates for the structure given the almost complete replacement of original windows, thereby removing the best evidence of earlier phases of construction. Finglas is fortunate in the amount of documentary sources that can provide evidence and context for earlier phases of development. However, as it stands today, no part of the church appears to predate 1200. Given the simple, common forms of church building that persisted for centuries, construction of the nave and chancel might be as late as the fourteenth or early fifteenth century. The aisle or side chapel was probably added in the fifteenth century, and the porch perhaps in the seventeenth century. The origin of the granite blocks may be the best clue as to the composition of earlier structures on the site, whether the granite derives from the same source as the Nethercross is also of interest.



38. To summarize, a simple sequence in the development of the building might be:

- a. Pre-Norman building(s) on site, perhaps including cut granite blocks.
- b. Construction of nave and chancel, with bellcote at west end.
(Detail of bellcote unclear but indicated on 1698 view).
- c. Aisle or side chapel added, chancel arch widened. Nave north window altered?
- d. Porch added.
- e. Windows modified with brick arches. Side chapel door sealed up and arcade infilled.



39. Detail of former door into the side chapel facing south in alignment with yew avenue.



40. Voids and cracks to stone vault to entrance porch



41. Loose stone at high level to nave.



42. West gable window.



43. View of sandstone window tracery to south end of chancel.

4.6 CHURCH CONDITION

The walls of the church are built predominantly of limestone random rubble, although there are several large, dimensioned stones in Wicklow granite that appear to have been re-used from another structure. The quoins to the corners do not exhibit dimensional accuracy, which along with surviving patches, confirm that the church was always intended to be rendered. Shallow stringcourses to the main (western) front facing Church Street may have been left unrendered. Sandstone ashlar form the jambs to the nave arches, niches and piscina. Carved sandstone mouldings have also survived as fragments around the windows. Many of the windows were either infilled or altered in the eighteenth or nineteenth century, so that most of the surviving openings surviving have round-headed brick surrounds, that were repointed in hard cement at the time that the mild steel grilles were installed. Areas of hard cement infill stone are the cause of the decay to embedded sandstone jambs to decay.

Since Dublin Corporation took over the graveyard in the mid-twentieth century, the wall tops have been capped with a thin bed of cement. These have caused the softer lime mortars directly below the cap to wash out at a faster rate than the walls below. In the worst locations, this has been the cause of instability and loss, which will continue to accelerate unless it is addressed. Overall, there are few areas of hard cement pointing to the walls, suggesting that those areas were repointed following sporadic losses.



44. Detail of sandstone piscina to side chapel with surviving layers of plaster.



45. View through side chapel arch into nave looking southeast.



46. West view into nave.



47. East view into chancel.



48. Northwest view.



49. View looking west in side chapel. Note fallen plaster on floor.

The nave is entered through a stone-roofed limestone rubble porch, a later addition. Its stonework is not keyed into the external face of the nave wall, leaving a gap that is being colonised by roots of vegetation growing on the top of the roof. In the past, these have created disturbance that may reoccur due to a lack of maintenance. Some stones are missing from the exterior, and there are large gaps and cracks internally. While wall plaster has survived to all walls, the roof vault retains no evidence of shuttering or plaster, perhaps lost to washing out. The mortar in the joints between the stones has washed out to a large degree, necessitating consolidation in areas to ensure that it retains its strength.

A set of mild steel entrance gates date to recent decades, are in fair condition and kept locked. While the entrance is now flush with the footpath, inside a pea gravel bed slopes up to the nave level. This covering continues across the church interior. Recent local clearance uncovered ledger slabs in the nave and chancel that may relate to the former floor level, of which none has been observed.

This area remains unstable until the masonry is consolidated using salvaged stone bedded lime mortar. This is the primary conservation priority and should not be delayed.

The walls are predominately built of limestone random rubble, although there are several other types of stone used. The walls suggest several phases of repair and reconstruction, using brick and assorted building stones. As noted above, sandstone dimensioned stone are prevalent, some of which have been re-used and are not in their original location. A lot of the stonework is untidy and displays poor workmanship. In some cases,

unfaced stones have been used to the walls. Much of the brick has eroded sacrificially against hard cement mortars and harder building stones to the walls. It appears that some of these bricks were replaced with modern bricks in the relatively recent past, which being bedded in cement, have caused damage to historic masonry to the surrounds. Cement cappings have been placed on the window cills, causing erosion below. Cement pointing is patchy at best, there are extensive areas of mortar loss to the joints both internally and externally.

Wall plaster survives, in poor condition, on all walls, and patches of render can be seen externally. Red oxide pigment can be seen peeking out where outer layers have fallen away on the entrance door into the nave, and possibly to the chancel arch. It is possible that several of the openings and features were lined out with simple pigmented frames around the edges as a decorative device. It is interesting to note that the considerable amount of plaster on the ground, appearing to confirm that the render is eroding at an accelerated rate.

The walls have been capped using hard concrete at eaves level, most of the protruding stone eaves course survives beneath. While no doubt installed with good intentions to weather the walls, it has caused erosion of the softer mortar and stone directly beneath, which in turn has been colonised by shrubs and ivy, accelerating the rate of decay through displacement and mortar loss. This can be observed at the corners with the gables, where larger shrubs have established, and along the tops of the walls generally.



50. View of exposed north chancel wall showing former openings in vulnerable condition.



51. Detail of sandstone jambs to side chapel arch.



52. Detail of piscina and alcoves to south wall of chancel.



53. Infilled door to side chapel.



54. View of main entrance door in nave. Note red pigmented plaster to reveal.



55. Lime mortar and eroding Calp.

Vegetation encroachment is widespread to the transept and the north wall of the nave, to the extent that much of the external surfaces are obscured. Ivy and shrubs have been treated with biocide, so that they are now dead and withering on the walls. This shrinkage and drying out of roots are the most likely cause of the collapse. Thick roots that exploited the joints between walls were killed off but there has been no follow-up programme of repair and consolidation yet that would ensure the stability of the masonry.

Cement pointing of brickwork is a particular problem to the window surrounds. Hard cement has also worked on areas where Calp limestone was used. This limestone is particularly vulnerable to erosion, being prone to decomposition along layers that have impurities such as oxides or shale in the case of the lowest quality stone. Calp was quarried close to Dublin and it is a very common building stone used on many churches and public buildings. However, due to its variable quality, it was most often used on less prominent parts of the buildings or for boundary walls. Often it was



56. Granite ashlar and surviving dash render to west gables.

used as rubble to form walls, and then rendered with lime mortars to give a neat and regular appearance to the building at a lower cost than ashlar stone. Mortar loss is prevalent on all sides of the church.

Corroding mild steel grilles and the gates are the cause of corrosion jacking locally. These should be replaced with non-corrosive stainless steel, should controlled access to the interior remain desirable.



57: View of Baron John Pocklington chest tomb (ref. 42) following ivy removal.

4.7 MORTUARY MONUMENTS

For a relatively small graveyard there is a wide range of mortuary monuments, many of which are of fine quality and of historical interest - vaults, pedestal monuments, wall memorials, chest tombs, table tombs, ledger slabs, crosses and headstones. It is noticeable how much space remains in the graveyard, even with the prevalence of larger modern plots. It seems likely that these areas are in fact unmarked burials, where the mortuary monuments may have been made from timber or iron that have eroded away or been displaced by vegetation. There are several examples

of this process to be found in the graveyard today, and it is important that all memorials are given due care and are conserved where practicable.

Headstones dating from the eighteenth and nineteenth century are often of a simple tripartite shoulder form in limestone, with inscriptions that follow a range of motifs in variations - IHS sunburst symbols; Glorias; winged cherubs set in roundels; the lamb of God and others. They often have roughly finished backs and drafted detailing to the top and sides. Examples from the late-nineteenth century have a wider range of sculptural detail and form, with moulded plinths and stone kerbs marking out the plots. While some of the railed enclosures to the high-status memorials have been cut-down, several have been carefully cleaned and painted recently by the community which greatly assists their conservation.

As new burials, for families with rights, continue to be accepted, the graveyard continues to be a repository of funerary art. There are some interesting examples of twentieth century memorials, but with the advent of industrialisation, the quality has fallen as is the case everywhere in Ireland. Today, most grave plots are marked out with kerbing, eventually, with timber crosses used as gravemarkers after the interment. An interesting twentieth century grave (ref.183), Rev. Nicholas Russell who died in 1949 and was parish priest of Finglas and St Margarets. It is designed as an abstracted coffin tomb out of a pigmented concrete mix or terrazzo with subtle modernist detailing. Several concrete crosses in the graveyard appear to use the same material.



58-65. Detail photos of mortuary monuments including chest tomb, table tombs, headstones, recumbent slabs and their condition.

While many of the monuments are well-preserved and in fair condition, others have suffered from damage caused abruptly by events such as tree falls in storms, and the slow decay caused by root damage or by ivy creeping along the ground which is a feature of this graveyard. Given the wide range of stone types, and the skills in their design and making, there is a wide variation of defects both structural and decorative. The structural stability and integrity of the monuments is the priority, where left unattended these will continue to decay and over time disappear. Slow weathering of the inscriptions on the stone surfaces not only leads to loss of the fine craftsmanship but most importantly the historical record and tangible connection to deceased family members that the stones represent. Another defect is the washing out of natural fissures, a common problem for monuments due to the variable quality of limestone used. Some of the limestone headstones are almost pristine, albeit with their inscriptions worn down over time, others show extensive cracking, and have lost their sides or heads. As they have matured, the trees have likely caused the loss of monuments that are no longer visible today. It is also possible that there may have been losses of limestone headstones due to their natural degradation over time.

Headstones are susceptible to settlement and collapse due to changes in ground conditions, tree falls or accidental damage. In areas that appear clear of burials, there may well have been plots marked by headstones that are now broken and lost or which have become buried over time. Others that have settled into a more severe tilt angle may be of structural concern and will require checks for their stability.



66. Ringed cross memorial to John Lanigan, antiquarian.

5.0 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Guidelines to the Burra Charter state that:

Cultural Significance is a concept which helps in estimating the value of places. The places that are likely to be of significance are those which help an understanding of the past or enrich the present, and which will be of value to future generations.

There are a variety of categories used to evaluate the level of a place's cultural significance. *Archaeological, Historical, Ecological, Architectural, Social and Artistic* interest categories will be used to assess the significance of the ecclesiastical site of St Canice, Finglas.

5.1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

- Finglas, along with Clondalkin, Dundrum, Donnybrook, Glasnevin, Tallaght and others form a group of monastic sites founded close to tributaries of the River Liffey, which all lend their names to suburban settlements outside of the historic city core. It is also one of sixty medieval church sites in north County Dublin.
- Analysis carried out by Dr Paul McCotter for this plan sets out how the boundaries of the ecclesiastical estate founded in the monastic period survives as the civil parish of Finglas. The graveyard best represents this wider archaeological landscape.



67. Inscription to seventeenth century recumbent slab in chancel.

- A carved granite high cross, known as the *Nethercross*, dates from this period and is the only such monument to survive in Dublin city. It is likely that the cross marked a boundary of the ecclesiastical estate and may have been one of several such crosses.
- The discovery of a burial of a high-status Norse woman of the ninth century close to the current graveyard boundary in 2004 provides evidence of a possible Viking phase of occupation.



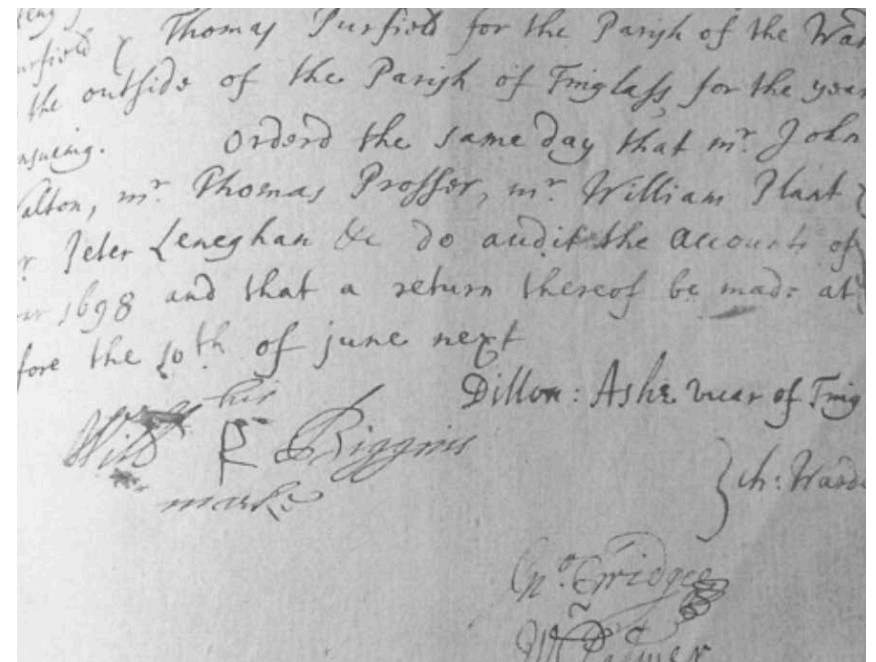
68. View of Nethercross from Dublin Penny Journal.

- Furthermore, the absence of annalistic records relating to the monastic site from the ninth to the eleventh century strengthens the possibility of Viking occupation of Finglas during this period.
- A case can be made for an oval medieval ecclesiastical enclosure to have measured approx 500 m in diameter and to have enclosed land on both sides of the glen. An alternative hypothesis is that the enclosure was D-shaped and terminated at the Finglas stream.
- Tentative analysis of historic maps, archaeological finds and local topography leave open the possibility that Finglas may have been a *longphort* or ship camp settlement during this time, with a distinctive D-shape enclosure set along a watercourse as is found at Waterford and Kilmainham.
- Cromwellian invasion lore tells us the Nethercross may have been moved from its primary location. However, analysis of the available historical sources indicates the high cross may have been knocked but not actually removed from the churchyard.
- Early medieval ecclesiastical enclosures can contain multiple separate churches, associated enclosures and burial grounds. It is probable Finglas falls within this type of site and the current graveyard is only one of many, albeit probably situated on the west side of the glen. St. Canice's graveyard is not necessarily the inner sanctum of the original ecclesiastical enclosure and could be the remains of a satellite church and graveyard.
- From the late twelfth century, Finglas was a prebendary church of the Cathedral of St Patrick. During this time, a simple stone church was built on this site which was extended and adapted in the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries. It may have been one of several churches within the ecclesiastical enclosure, which would have replaced earlier, timber structures.

- Over the centuries, the site and its setting has passed through several major phases of development. It is possible that the curvilinear form of the inner enclosure can still be perceived in the alignment of the graveyard wall along Church Street.
- Mortuary monuments in the graveyard date from the seventeenth century to the present, with a fine collection of recumbent slabs within the church walls. It is apparent that many burials are only evident from depressions visible along the ground, any markers being lost over time.

5.2 HISTORICAL INTEREST

- Tradition connects Finglas to some of the founders of Christianity in Ireland. St Patrick, who after residing there for a time, predicted that it would one day become the capital of Ireland. St Canice (Cainneach) is thought to have founded a monastery here in 560, along with religious houses at Aghaboe; Kilkenny and in Scotland. Having studied under Finnian at Clonard in the fifth century, Canice is celebrated as one of the *Twelve Apostles of Ireland*.
- During the eighth century, Finglas and Tallaght were known as the *Eyes of Ireland* given their association with the Céilí Dé movement which advocated an austere form of religious life.
- Annalistic sources record a succession of abbots and bishops at Finglas from the eight to the thirteenth century. Noticeable gaps appear during the tenth and twelfth centuries that may relate to



69. Extract from Vestry Book published in Ní Mhurchada.

Norse settlement or eventual abandonment following diocesan reforms.

- Surviving vestry books from 1657-1758, held in the RCB Library, provide valuable information on parish administration during this period. The books are rare in an Irish context and give insights into the upkeep and improvement of the church and its graveyard.

- Antiquarian views and contemporaneous accounts of the eighteenth and nineteenth century record the cross and contribute to its significance.
- The graveyard should be considered among the oldest Christian burial grounds in Co. Dublin. Inscriptions on the mortuary monuments are a valuable historic record alongside entries in the burial registers.
- The graveyard is recorded as containing the buried remains of several notable individuals from civic and cultural life dating back to the seventeenth century. Memorials from the late twentieth century are of interest in relation to changes to established communities by the expansion of suburban Dublin.

5.3 ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST

- Its ruined medieval parish church is the oldest surviving building in Finglas. It is a recorded monument and protected structure and was likely to have been built in the thirteenth century. Some of its stonework may have been reused from an earlier building on the site.
- After six centuries of use, in 1843 the church was replaced by a new building on a new site across Church Street. Elaborate wall memorials were relocated into the new church, but otherwise the church was left to ruin while the graveyard remained active.



70. View of Lawlor pedestal memorial (314) in granite with limestone statue.



71. View along yew avenue from south door identified by L. Beaumont.

- By the end of the nineteenth century, the church was in a ruined state but with its roof timbers still surviving. In the middle of the twentieth century the graveyard and church were taken into the care of Dublin Corporation.
- The graveyard contains gravestones that are fine examples of monumental stonework, dating from the seventeenth century to the present.

- Views from and towards the graveyard, church and Nethercross are essential components of the historic character of Finglas village.

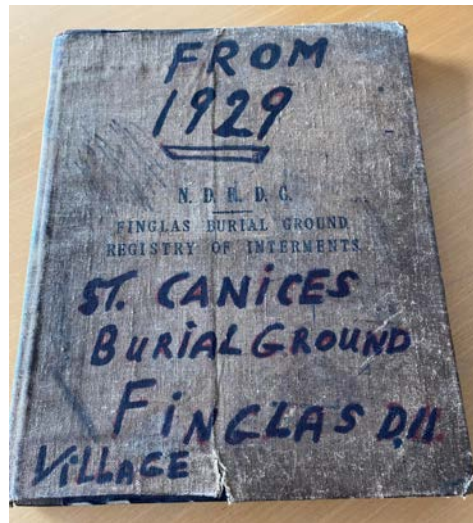
5.4 ECOLOGICAL INTEREST

- The ecclesiastical site is a 'remnant' historical landscape in an urban setting which offers an experience of its former rural character. A relictual 18th century tree (Irish yew) planting scheme appears to survive in the graveyard. Framing two pathways around the west and southern graveyard boundaries.
- Yew trees are characteristic of historical Irish burial places. Finglas has a fine collection of these trees, some likely over two hundred years old. Vestry books contain information on the planting of yews from the seventeenth century, and a twelfth century account mentions yews and ash being cut down at the graveyard for use by archers.
- A local landmark, noticeable by tall trees and boundary walls, its Vegetation provides an important greening benefit to the west side of Finglas village.
- Further to a habitat study, its ecological value to Finglas village may be better understood and conservation measures put in place.

5.5 SOCIAL INTEREST

- The graveyard has long been a source of interest for the local community, where residents of all ages learn more about the cultural history of Finglas and Dublin city. A rich local folklore is associated with the site, and which contributes to its interest.

- The graveyard contains evidence of residents of the Finglas area from the seventeenth centuries to the present. Its mixture of Roman Catholic and Protestant burials may be instructive for future studies of religious politics and practices in Dublin.



72. Burial record.

- The Nethercross in its current location is a much-loved landmark closely associated with the rich heritage of Finglas by its residents. The church, although partially obscured by the flyover bridge, is a source of visual interest in the village.
- During the preparation of this report, extensive public consultation was carried out among community representatives, interested parties and schools, where the social significance of the site was communicated.
- Several initiatives organised by the DCC City Archaeologist over the past decade have engaged with the various stakeholders and this leaves a legacy of social significance.

- Community value of historic burial site which is still in use and includes 'family trees' and family plots. Religious rites are still hosted at the graveyard, including Cemetery Sunday in Summer.
- There is a hardback burial record for the graveyard which is of historical and social interest.

5.5 ARTISTIC INTEREST

- Irish high crosses together form a collection of medieval sculpture of European significance. Each of the surviving crosses contribute to this cultural heritage.
- While its carvings have faded over the centuries, the Nethercross was the subject of antiquarian drawings and descriptions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Carefully composed photographs of the high cross dating from the late-nineteenth century also contribute to its interest.
- The church was also the subject of antiquarian views. Its carved stone windows and possibly its surviving plasterwork demonstrate the skill and artistry of those who constructed the church in various stages in the late medieval period.
- The gravestones include fine examples of monumental art, dating from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries. There are some high-status mortuary monuments which are well-executed using the finest materials and architectural detailing. Some of the more modest monuments, are also imbued with meaning and artistic expression.



73. Lantern slide of high cross and admirers taken from south held in RSAI archive.

5.6 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The St Canice's church and graveyard in Finglas has evolved over one thousand five hundred years, being the site of an early medieval monastic enclosure. Its ecclesiastical estate can be seen in the boundaries of the civil parish of Finglas, and once encompassed a large territory to the north of the River Tolka. It is one of a group of monastic sites forming the medieval cores of suburban settlements around Dublin city. There is a possibility that it also played a role during the Viking settlement of Dublin and Fingal.

Although its carvings have eroded over the centuries and part of its shaft and perhaps its original base are missing, the Nethercross contributes to the cultural heritage that Irish high crosses represent at a European level. Being the subject of antiquarian views and a rich folklore adds to its value to experts and locals alike. While it maintains the appearance of an eighteenth-century churchyard, its ruined church was first constructed in the late-medieval period, its curved boundary wall to Church Street may follow the alignment of a medieval ecclesiastical enclosure.

Since the 1950s, with the expansion of the city suburbs, the village was encircled by new housing estates. The graveyard serves as a vital link to the former village character of Finglas for the community, who take a keen interest in its history and its continued preservation. Gravemarkers provide connections across generations of families and its ancient past. As a multi-phased ecclesiastical site, with a high cross, Viking burial, late-medieval church, vestry books and high-status mortuary monuments - St Canice's, Finglas is a historic place of National Significance.

6.0 DEFINING ISSUES & ASSESSING VULNERABILITY

6.1 STATUTORY PROTECTION

Historic built fabric and wildlife at St Canice's graveyard are given protection under the following legislation:

- National Monuments Acts, 1930–2004, and the Record of Monuments & Places, established under Section 12 of the 1994 Act.
- Planning and Development Acts 2000-2010, and the Dublin City Council Development Plan 2016-2022. The creation of a Record of Protected Structures within this Plan is set out in section 51 of the 2000 Act.
- EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)
- EU Birds Directive (79/409/EEC as amended 2009/147/EC)
- Wildlife Amendment Act (2000)

6.1.1 PROTECTION OF THE BUILT HERITAGE

Statutory protection is afforded by the Record of Protected Structures, and the Sites & Monuments Records. Monuments included in the statutory Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) prepared by each local authority, or the Sites & Monuments Record (SMR) prepared by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland, are referred to as recorded monuments and are protected under the provisions of the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004. The SMR references include recommendations for certain sites of



74. Extract from Dublin City Development Plan zoning map showing Zone of Archaeological Interest, Conservation Area, Z9 Open Space zoning and protected structures on the site.

interest to be included in the next edition of the RMP, if they have not been already included. Local authorities, whenever a monument is identified on lands in their ownership, issue a report to the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage so that they can assess whether the monument should be classified as a National Monument.

A monument is defined in Section 2 of the Act as:

'any artificial or partly artificial building, structure, or erection whether above or below the surface of the ground and whether affixed or not affixed to the ground and any cave, stone, or other

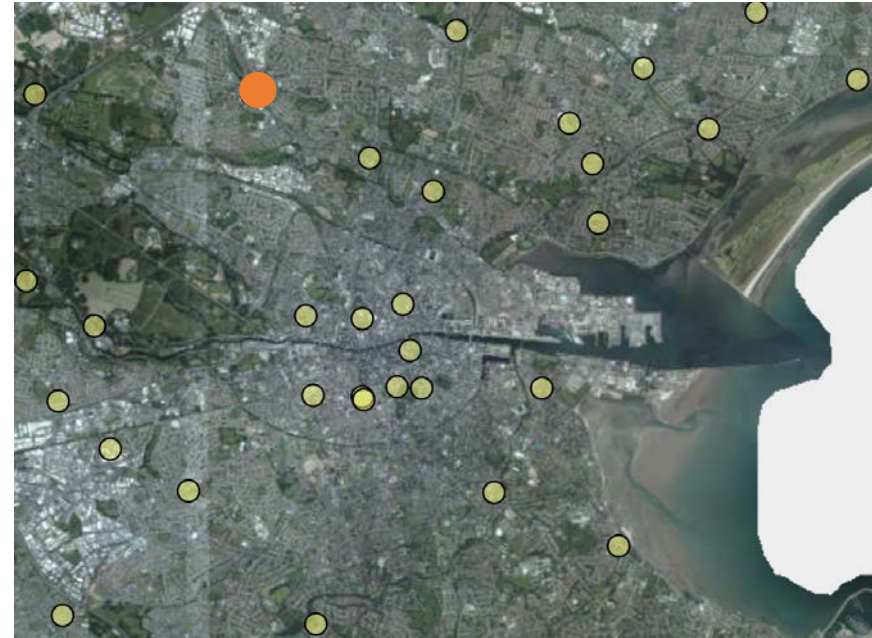
natural product whether forming part of or attached to or not attached to the ground which has been artificially carved, sculptured or worked upon or which .. appears to have been purposely put or arranged in position and any prehistoric or ancient tomb, grave or burial deposit, but does not include any building which is for the time being habitually used for ecclesiastical purposes'

The graveyard has five recorded monuments listed as; DU014-066009- Church; DU014-066010- Cross - High Cross; DU015-066017- Graveslab; DU014-066016- Graveslab; DU014-066017- Graveyard. Two other monuments that may relate to the ecclesiastical site include DU014-066002- Ritual Site – holy well; DU014-066008- Town Defences. It is also located within its own Conservation Area with a separate area for the current church across the street. The former village of Finglas, including the ecclesiastical site, is designated as a Zone of Archaeological Interest. The graveyard is zoned as Z9 - *To preserve, provide and improve recreational amenity and open space and green networks.*

The ruined church, stone cross and graveyard are listed together (ref. 1552) in the Record of Protected Structures in the Dublin City Council Development Plan 2016-2022.

6.2 OWNERSHIP & USE

The church and graveyard are owned by Dublin City Council on behalf of the public and managed by Parks, Biodiversity and Landscapes Services.



75. Location of graveyards in Dublin city, Finglas orange dot (HEV).

Tidy Towns are active in maintaining the graveyard. Overall, there are over 80 known historical burial places (including vaults and sites with little or no trace of the former burials) within the city boundaries, predominantly for the larger religious denominations.

New burials in the graveyard are restricted to existing family plots. No new burial plots are available. The fact that the graveyard has survived in such a good state of preservation and maintenance, is due to community volunteerism as well as investment and expertise provided by the local

authority. Local heritage groups and individuals have made representations to the council, seeking its conservation and enhancement. In the last decade several initiatives have been undertaken at the site which included public consultation and engagement.

6.3 BUILT HERITAGE

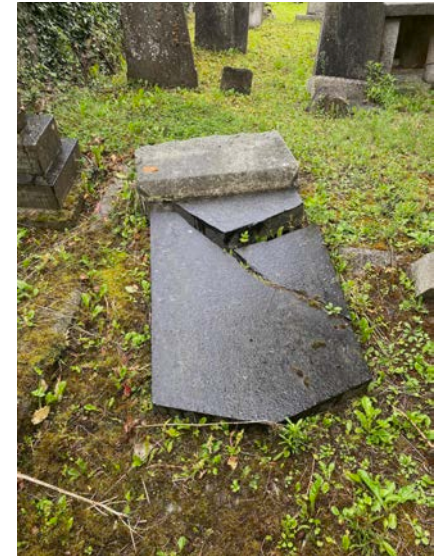
Of most concern in relation to the conservation of the graveyard is the condition of the ruined church, the high cross and several of the mortuary monuments. While the church walls are reasonably stable, they are suffering from the effects of vegetation encroachment and the use of hard cement mortars and mild steel grilles and gates. Although well-meaning in their intention to protect and weather the ruin, the hard cement cappings to wall heads and openings are the cause of decay to historic stonework.

Encroaching vegetation at high level is difficult to access without specialist equipment and expertise. Small shrubs and ivy are displacing stones and contributing to the loss of mortar. Removals by volunteers have exposed damage to historic window heads in the chancel, which was almost entirely covered by ivy. On both internal and external walls, surviving wall plasters are of concern and should be addressed as a priority before there are further irretrievable losses.

The boundary walls to the north, south and west sides are of considerable age, being visible on historic maps in close to their current alignment. Unfortunately, much of the east wall collapsed in recent decades during

works to construct new housing on the adjacent site, leading to human remains being exposed.

There are also concerns about the condition and settings of some of the mortuary monuments in the graveyard. Several have collapsed or toppled over, and others have been damaged by encroaching tree growth. Several headstones have eroded to the extent that their inscriptions are no longer legible. Corrosion jacking is affecting some of the more complex monuments that used hidden ferrous metal cramps. Corrosion of ironwork railings is more obvious; however, volunteers have stabilized some railings by giving them a coating of paint.



76. Fallen and cracked headstone.

6.4 ACCESS & SETTINGS

Access should continue to be monitored so that due respect is shown to the memory of those interred in the graveyard; their families and descendants. Both gates are indicated on historic maps, and by tradition, the north gate was used by Protestants and the south gate by Roman Catholics. At present, the entrance gates and gate into the church are kept locked, largely securing the graveyard from anti-social behaviour.



77. View of Barrack Lane (south) gate entrance steps.

The Lynch family, with a long association with the graveyard over three generations. Their former role as keyholders, and their many initiatives and continued advocacy for the conservation of the graveyard along with other community groups is readily acknowledged and appreciated.

It would be beneficial for the graveyard to enjoy more visits from the public, both locals and tourists. To that end, it should be an objective to allow the graveyard to be visited by appointment, allowing improved access and engagement while managing the risk of anti-social behaviour. Sensitively-designed handrails on the entrance steps to the north gate would greatly assist many visitors who have impairments to their mobility to access the graveyard. The south gate is already served with handrails.

While it should always be a priority to provide access to all visitors - given relative heights to surrounding streets; the sensitivity of the archaeological heritage and placement of the entrance gates; it is not feasible to provide access ramps into the graveyard. Views into the graveyard are possible from the fly-over footbridge linking the two sides of the historic village.

No dedicated car parking is available for the graveyard, although there is on-street parking on Church Street. Hearses can pull up on Barrack Street with prior notice, but steep steps are unavoidable. A re-designed public realm along Church Street as outlined in DCC *Finglas Strategy* (2021) has the potential to provide dedicated parking spaces; removal of the flyover; improved visibility and access to the graveyard; while improving permeability and the historic setting and presentation of this most historic part of Finglas village.



78. View from Church Street showing impact of pedestrian bridge.

6.5 HEALTH & SAFETY

While a secluded site is always at risk of anti-social behaviour, the role of the Lynch family as keyholders has been a great asset over the decades and should be maintained as far as possible. However, as noted above, scheduled opening of the gates or by prior appointment could be considered on a pilot basis to improve permeability and footfall. When leaving the path, uneven ground and monuments in vulnerable condition

can pose a risk to visitors to the graveyard. Overgrowth of trees and vegetation can pose a safety risk to the public, as well as the monuments. Barbed wire placed along the wall tops is a risk to public safety and should be removed where practicable. Corroding metal supports can cause damage to historic walls. The structures are floodlight externally, which improves site safety.

6.6 INTERPRETATION

Finglas has a rich cultural heritage that deserves to be better understood and communicated to locals and visitors. The high cross could be considered as an icon for Finglas, its best representative of its rich cultural heritage. While a recognizably Christian symbol, being of considerable antiquity and with its own distinct character perhaps allows it to be adopted more widely by the community. Being ruined and built and adapted over several phases, the church can be challenging to interpret even for those with special interest in archaeology or historic buildings. Memorials offer a tangible connection to previous generations, and a pleasant setting can create an atmosphere of contemplation. It is essential that interpretive material in the graveyard respects the memory and identity of all those buried within its walls, their families, relatives, and descendants who visit. It should also follow an overall masterplan for the site so that conservation and enhancement proposals are comprehensive and coordinated to minimize impacts.

6.7 VULNERABILITIES & THREATS

The vulnerability of the cultural heritage of the ecclesiastical site of St Canice at Finglas can be summarised as set out below:

- As its environs continue to be developed over time, the cultural heritage of the monument, in all its phases, needs to be protected from adverse impacts.
- Interventions will be necessary to provide improved access, repair or stabilise the church, boundary walls, Nethercross and mortuary monuments. This work should be reversible and not detract from the setting of the historic place or structure.
- The Nethercross while apparently stable is nonetheless in a vulnerable location and will continue to weather and degrade over time. Regular inspections should be carried out to ensure that it is not subject to vandalism or sudden impacts due to climate change.
- The condition of the church and boundary walls along Church Street should be addressed, and the graveyard made more accessible and safer to use.
- Further development of the setting of the church and graveyard should be carefully assessed for impacts on the historic setting, built fabric and archaeology.



79. Copy of Du Noyer drawing by Willam Frazer (NLI).

7.0 CONSERVATION & MANAGEMENT POLICIES

7.1 APPROACH & OBJECTIVES

All conservation works are guided by the principle of *minimum intervention* as set out in the Burra Charter – or *as little as possible, but as much as is necessary*.

The conservation and management objectives for St Canice’s ecclesiastical site can be summarised as follows:

- evaluate the impact of climate change on the historic monument so that any prevention or mitigation measures can be planned and implemented in a timely manner to avoid loss of cultural value
- to provide guidance on best conservation practice for the preservation of the built heritage of the ecclesiastical site; the Nethercross, the church, stone boundary walls and mortuary monuments
- to provide for the effective management of the flora and fauna especially the mature yews, including timely treatment of invasive species, and assessment of the impact of the natural heritage on the cultural heritage to find the correct balance
- to set out an approach as to how to improve access to the church and graveyard to locals and family members, as well as the presentation of the cultural heritage to all visitors.
- to increase knowledge, awareness and understanding of the church and graveyard, including their medieval origins and importance to the development of Finglas village

- identify key messages and themes to be communicated to visitors
- ensure that interpretations of the built and cultural heritage of the graveyard are well-researched in relation to the ecclesiastical site with its high cross and medieval church as well as being sensitive to the memories of those buried and their descendants
- to provide for the use of the church and graveyard as a cultural and educational resource
- ensure that the church and graveyard is accessible to as many people as possible, but not to the detriment of its built heritage or to the safety and health of the public
- to continue to maintain the church graveyard, while seeking capital funding or any available grants for its enhancement
- to promote the ecclesiastical site as a heritage asset for the area, making links and forming networks with other heritage sites around the city and further afield

7.2 POLICIES

7.2.1 PROTECTION OF BUILT HERITAGE

Ensure the protection of the built heritage through its maintenance and repair and the preservation and improvement of its settings. Repair works are to be prioritised in terms of urgency (climate resilience, structural safety stability, public safety), and informed by regular inspection and expert advice. Views towards the Nethercross and church should be preserved.

7.2.2 PROTECTION OF NATURAL HERITAGE

Carry out a habitat study for the graveyard, with an aim to increase species diversity. Avoid the use of herbicides, maintain the planting, and manage lawn on a seasonal rather than a weekly/monthly basis. Ensure that works

proposals for the graveyard are informed by an arboricultural impact assessment.

7.2.3 REPAIR & MAINTENANCE

Continue regular on-going maintenance as the most effective way to preserve historic structures and landscapes. Repairs to historic fabric should be carried out using conservation methodologies that conform to the guiding principles as set out in the ICOMOS charters, using appropriate



80. View of ivy encroachment to SW corner and encroaching development.

details and materials of matching quality. Conservation should proceed to an overall strategy for repair and maintenance of built and natural heritage.

7.2.4 URGENT WORKS

The condition of the historic boundary wall is of most concern given the risk public safety, followed by the condition of the chancel where there is a risk of loss of historic fabric. Strategic tree removal and careful sequencing of specialist repair works will be required to ensure that the risks to the safety of the public, and preservation of the graveyard are addressed.

7.2.5 INTERVENTION

Where interventions are found to be necessary to improve access, or to conserve a structure, these are to be designed to the highest conservation standards and should not detract from the interpretation of the architectural heritage. Future projects should be focussed on conserving and improving access to historic features, with each initiative seen as a learning opportunity to come to a fuller understanding of the cultural heritage of the place.

7.2.6 USE

As the graveyard continues to accept burials, there is less space available for new plots or interments. Consultation should be undertaken between Dublin City Council and the National Monuments Service regarding burials in this sensitive archaeological site.

7.2.7 REVERSIBILITY

All interventions should follow the principle of the reversibility, so that a structure or site can be returned to its former state where possible.



81. View of Nethercross from East Finglas which should be retained.

7.2.8 UNIVERSAL ACCESS

Improve access to the graveyard for people of differing abilities, with minimum interference to setting and without causing damage to the monuments. Where the public realm is being upgraded, provision should be made for convenient parking areas and access for those with mobility and visual impairments addressed.

7.2.9 EXPERT ADVICE & SKILLS

Continue to ensure that all conservation works are carried out under the direction of suitably qualified professionals (specialist conservators,

conservation architects and structural engineers) and undertaken only by suitably skilled and experienced artisans and tradesmen.

7.2.10 CONSULTATION

Consultation with stakeholders regarding proposed interventions to the graveyard is important on a site of religious, social and cultural significance. This process which has been ongoing for about a decade, should continue as the project progresses through the necessary phases.

7.2.11 SETTINGS & KEY VIEWS

Protect and enhance the settings of the built heritage including key views of the Nethercross, church and across the graveyard towards local landmarks.

7.2.12 FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

As the immediate environs of the graveyard are further developed, its heritage and setting needs to be protected from adverse impacts including overshadowing or overlooking, poor design and massing.

7.2.13 INVASIVE SPECIES

Being secluded and not in daily use, the graveyard is at risk of invasive plant species establishing in quiet corners unseen. Monitoring and treatment should be undertaken, using best practice by avoiding the use of herbicides and reducing potential impacts on the environment, built heritage and to the burials. Buddleia proliferates on the church, boundary wall and adjacent vacant properties, and this can cause extensive damage to structures if not treated and removed promptly.

7.2.14 CONSERVATION PLAN REVIEW

Review this Plan at agreed intervals (every 6-years to coincide with Development Plans or Local Area Plans) to benchmark progress in implementation, re-assess priorities, assimilate new information or changes in legislation or methodologies. This overview reduces the risk of cumulative impacts due to incremental change without an agreed plan.

7.2.15 LICENSING & APPROVALS

Any archaeological investigation will need to be licensed, notice for works will need to be sent to the National Monuments Services two months in advance of works commencing in accordance with the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004.

7.2.16 INSPECTIONS

Continue the on-going monitoring of the condition of the Nethercross, graveyard walls, church, mortuary monuments and the trees.

7.2.17 DEPTH IN TIME

Ensure that the conservation and preservation of the built and cultural heritage of the ecclesiastical site requires that all the aspects that contribute to its cultural significance be valued.

7.2.18 WIDER ASSOCIATIONS

St Canice ecclesiastical site should be conserved as a cultural landscape for the benefit of the public, respecting its status as a recorded monument and part of an early-medieval ecclesiastical site. Historic places and sites should

not be considered in isolation, but rather as parts of a wider cultural landscape, where each element relates to the other.

7.2.19 AUTHENTICITY

Ensure that the importance of continuity and change in the proper understanding of the built heritage is communicated to the public. This is particularly important for St Canice ecclesiastical site, given its ancient origins, the possibility of Viking occupation, uncertainty of the original location of the Nethercross and the condition of the medieval church.

7.2.20 OWNERSHIP

Consider rights of families and descendants of those interred in the graveyard in relation to the access, conservation and presentation of the built and landscape heritage.



82. Signage at south gate.

7.2.21 PUBLIC SAFETY

Prioritise public safety in relation to the proximity to the busy dual carriageway, overhanging branches, uneven ground, the proximity and condition of the monuments. However, the present condition of the boundary wall and church are of primary concern and will require a programme of specialist works.

7.2.22 SECURITY

While the locking of the gate and keyholding has been effective in minimising vandalism in the graveyard, it should be an objective to encourage more visitors where the risk of anti-social activity is not increased.

7.2.23 LEAVE NO TRACE

Visitors to the graveyard are to be informed of their shared responsibility for its conservation by avoiding activities or behaviour that put it at risk. This would include but not limited to littering, vandalism, graffiti, unauthorised access, lighting fires, ground disturbance or anything that would cause disturbance to other visitors or the local community.

7.2.24 INTERPRETIVE FACILITIES

Update interpretative signage, designed in accordance with an overall masterplan, so that the public can more meaningfully interpret the cultural heritage. Signs should be well-designed and located so as not to detract from their setting. Visitors should be informed of the necessity to show respect in a place of religious observance.

7.2.25 ACCESS TO NATURAL & LANDSCAPE HERITAGE

Suitable signage and infrastructure to encourage biodiversity, should be provided. A planting scheme and management plan should be prepared for inclusion in an overall masterplan.

7.2.26 FORMAL & INFORMAL LEARNING

Ensure that the presentation of the cultural heritage of the graveyard is aimed at as broad an audience as possible.

7.2.27 ON-GOING INTERPRETATION

As knowledge and understanding of the graveyard and those interred within its walls grows and changes through further research and investigations, ensure that interpretation media are updated accordingly.

7.2.28 SUSTAINABILITY

Ensure that all events and initiatives in relation to the cultural and natural heritage of the St Canice ecclesiastical site are carried out in accordance with sustainable practices.

7.2.29 OUTREACH & PARTICIPATION

Support and promote initiatives such as HistoricGraves.com that provide a valuable and accessible resource for those undertaking genealogical research from abroad. Encourage local schools to use the graveyard as a teaching resource. Field trips could be managed by appointment and would have relevance to religious studies, history and civics.

8.0 CONSERVATION & ACCESS STRATEGIES

8.1 INTRODUCTION

St Canice's graveyard in Finglas, along with many other burial grounds in the city, will continue to be maintained and preserved by Dublin City Council. Given the assistance of the CMF 2021 grant they have undertaken a number of initiatives;

- arranged for the survey of the memorial inscriptions by John Tierney of Eachtra/ historicgraves.com;
- commissioned a professional historian to research the origins of the ecclesiastical estate;
- commissioned an arborist report;
- carried out a laser scan survey of the Nethercross;
- commissioned an aerial drone and topographical survey;
- carried out public consultation events with local representatives, community groups and interested residents;
- undertook extensive engagement with local schools including field trips;
- commissioned this conservation and management plan

However, while the graveyard is secure and accessible; to ensure the preservation of its monuments and built heritage, conservation and enhancement works will be necessary. Works to the historic boundary wall and church are essential to public safety, as well as for the preservation of the burials and the built heritage of the graveyard.



83. Graphic design of Nethercross produced by Kate Halpin as part of CMF2021.

8.2 AUDIENCES

The conservation of a complex site involves input from many different sources, each with their expertise or areas of responsibility. These stakeholders are the intended audience of the Conservation Management Plan. Their understanding and adoption of the conservation and interpretation policies are crucial to the preservation of St Canice's graveyard as a valuable cultural place for the benefit of the community.

8.2.1 STATE BODIES

Dublin City Council are guardians of the graveyard with responsibility for its maintenance, bye-laws in relation to burials, and also for implementation of planning policy in its environs and ensuring its statutory protection. The



84. Guided visit to graveyard during public consultation in 2021.

National Monuments Service in the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage also oversee the statutory protection of the graveyard, being a recorded monument.

8.2.2 LOCAL COMMUNITY

Improving understanding and appreciation of the graveyard among the local community will enhance local pride in their cultural heritage and assist motivated residents to become active stakeholders in preserving this special place.

8.2.3 VISITORS

Visitors to Ireland often avail of genealogical resources to trace family trees. Visiting memorials of relatives is an important part of these journeys and can be of profound personal significance.

8.2.4 SCHOOLS/ UNIVERSITIES

Continue to foster interest and appreciation of the cultural heritage among the local community through education programmes for schools. It is a valuable teaching aid for students in subjects such as archaeology, religion, architecture, as well as tourism and heritage protection, flora and fauna.

8.2.5 CULTURAL HERITAGE & HISTORICAL GROUPS

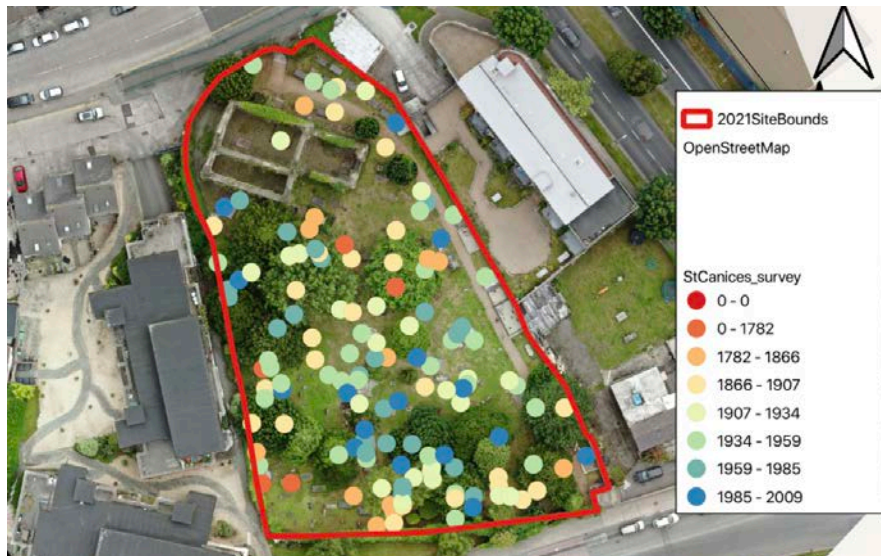
Local groups with interest in heritage should be encouraged to engage with the cultural heritage that the graveyard represents and communicate this to their neighbours and visitors.

8.3 KEY MESSAGES/ THEMES

To frame the interpretation of St Canice's, it is important to set out clearly the messages and themes that are to be communicated to the relevant audiences. It is essential that all information be communicated to the public in a structured, engaging way.

8.3.1 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Further research is necessary to understand the historic development of St Canice's during the medieval and early modern periods. It is important that existing knowledge is accurately conveyed, and further research questions



85. GIS analysis of memorial dates and phasing by Eachtra Heritage.

outlined and presented in ways that make visits to the church and graveyard more vivid.

8.3.2 LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

Visitors to Ireland often avail of genealogical resources to trace their family history, imbuing ordinary family details significance aside from major historical events. Using the internet, such records can be made available and updated cost effectively.

8.3.3 CONSERVATION & MAINTENANCE

Descriptions of the initiatives Dublin City Council have made to conserve the cultural and natural heritage of the graveyard is of interest, enhancing

pride in their achievements, acknowledging donors or government investment. When carried out to best conservation practice, it can serve as exemplars and inspiration for similar projects elsewhere.

8.4 PRESENTATION & MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

8.4.1 STATUTORY PROTECTION

While the graveyard is a recorded monument, further statutory protections could be considered for a place of this significance. Dublin City Council should consult with the National Monuments Service to determine whether the ecclesiastical site should be classified as National Monument, being a recorded monument in public ownership. In practice, this higher level of protection will mean that requests for archaeological investigations or approvals for works will bring a higher level of assessment, and on a more formal basis. Similar burial grounds around the city have been deemed National Monuments, which is the decision of the Dept. of Housing, Local Government & Heritage.

8.4.2 IMPROVED LINKAGES

Online resources, such as historicgraves.com, allow the graveyard to be accessible worldwide for genealogical and other forms of research. Providing spaces for information to be shared can help to enrich our knowledge of the graveyard and its wider associations with personal stories and cultural heritage.

8.4.3 COMMUNITY USE

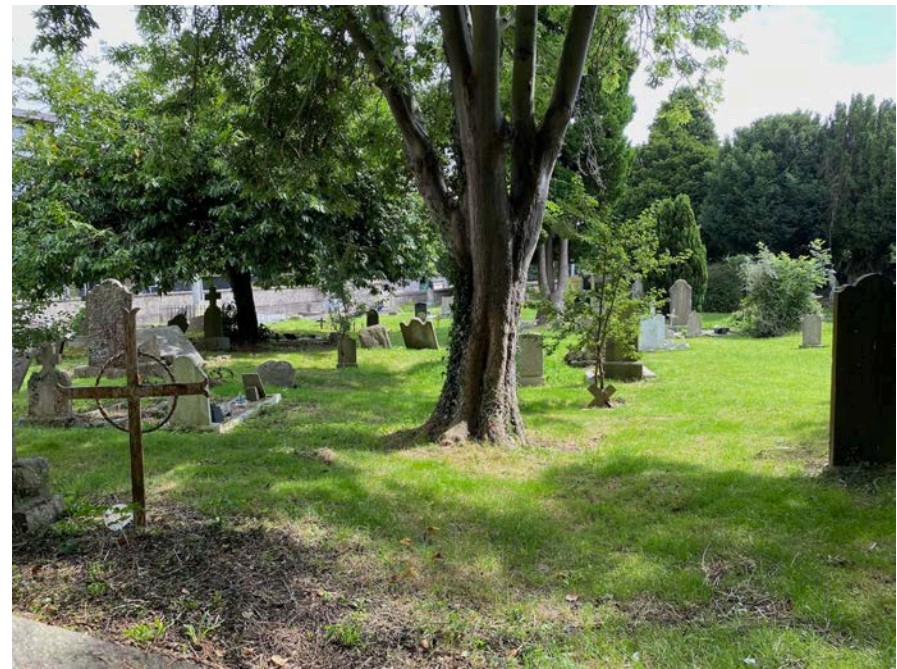
Increasing knowledge and understanding of the graveyard among the local community will assist in its preservation.

8.4.4 INTERPRETATIVE MEDIA

The present information signs provide excellent and well-illustrated information for visitors. A map of the graveyard along with the list of names would be very informative and help visitors navigate the graveyard if hosted on the internet or on a smartphone app. Signs should also link into online resources using QR (Quick Response) codes or other devices; including historicgraves.com or other sites with a special interest in built heritage or social history.

8.5 BIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

The conservation of built heritage and natural heritage should not involve decisions that risk the permanent loss of either. It can be a difficult balance different requirements and requires consultation and teamwork between the built heritage professionals and the ecologists. Works that disturb or displace any protected species will be avoided where possible. In the unlikely event that such impacts cannot be avoided, a derogation licence should be sought from the National Parks and Wildlife Service. It is recommended that a bat and breeding bird survey should be undertaken in advance of any works ensuring that any bats that may take up residence in the ruin would be adequately protected. Some crevices should be left open following conservation of the ruins to suitable habitats for wildlife. Bird and bat boxes should be provided where possible if significant



86. View over graveyard in late-Summer 2021.

roosting/nesting habitat are lost because of the conservation works. There is a valuable biodiversity already present in the graveyard. Yews, holly and cherry provide a source of food for wildlife. Valerian and Buddleia proliferate when allowed, and the latter has caused extensive damage to the church. Although ivy can be a nuisance it provides an important source of nectar and pollen for bees and other insects and provides berries, which provide a source of food for birds during the winter months. Mortuary monuments, walls and ruins are hosts to a wide variety of moss and lichen



87. Ants swarming on headstone.

species, so over-cleaning should be avoided, also ensuring that inscriptions are not lost over time.

Common to other graveyards being managed by DCC, reducing mowing in Summer to establish a seasonal wildflower meadow is to be encouraged. Cutting on rotation across the graveyard could ensure that there is a variety of grass lengths, avoiding the impression of neglect. Bulbs could be planted for spring flowers adding early spring colour and providing a source of pollen and nectar in advance of the wildflowers. Fertilizer and weed killers are avoided by DCC Parks staff.

Where management practices for biodiversity are undertaken within the graveyard, this should be explained to visitors through educational signage. Useful information may include an explanation of why certain areas of the grassland are not cut, or information on the value and special interest of lichens on gravestones, especially where it relates to over-cleaning. The graveyard could provide a testing ground for locals to try out in their own gardens, encouraging both flora and fauna.

8.6 CONSERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS

8.6.1 MAINTENANCE & REPAIR OF BUILT HERITAGE

The protection and maintenance of existing built heritage or mortuary monuments, especially the church and boundary walls should take priority. In this way, the gradual process of decay is arrested, allowing this sacred place to be maintained in perpetuity.

Preservation of the mortuary monuments is an important task; however care should be taken to not 'over-restore', thereby removing the evidence of age that conveys its historic character. In many cases, surface growths cause no harm to the stone; however natural fissures where left exposed can lead to considerable loss. Headstones that are tilting, if stable, are to be left as found. However, where there is an immediate risk of collapse, they should be stabilised by re-setting them on a solid base.



88. Leylandii destroying memorial.

Ivy removed from the walls in the chancel in 2021 has left the former window openings on the east wall interior vulnerable to losses unless action is taken. Roots from Buddleia and ivy have driven into the gaps between the sandstone window tracery that survives to the southwest corner and the surrounding stone. These stones are also at risk from hard cement used for the infill masonry which is causing the softer surfaces to erode sacrificially. Elsewhere, the walls should be pinned and pointed using lime and sand mortar and the wall heads flanché after the careful removal of ivy and shrubs. Care needs to be taken to protect the recumbent slabs and the surviving wall plaster for the duration of the works.

Emergency repairs to the boundary walls and selective removal of trees will be required to assist in their preservation as well as the security of the site and safety of the public. This work is to be carried out by conservation specialists and be implemented outside the nesting season in accordance with an arboriculture impact assessment. Proposed phasing is as follows:

Phase 1

- Church chancel walls to the exterior and interior.
- Tree surgery close to the Nethercross and ivy removal to the boundary walls and church walls.
- Boundary walls in poor condition, especially close to footpaths.
- Cluster of table tombs and recumbent slabs close to porch

Phase 2

- Nave & entrance porch repairs including wall cappings
- Repairs to remaining 'red' category mortuary monuments
- Remaining repairs to boundary walls

Phase 3

- Side chapel (or aisle) repairs including wall cappings
- Repairs to selected 'amber' category mortuary monuments
- Replacement of mild steel grilles and gates to church openings with stainless steel

8.6.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

A drone survey by Western Aerial Surveys has provided a valuable record of the graveyard at this time, which included digital surface modelling and orthoimages that have been already utilised by the team archaeologist and conservation architect in the preparation of this report. Geophysical survey techniques are constantly improving and may well yield interesting data that will provide insights into the archaeological heritage of the monastic period. This might include the identification of other burials on the site or the location of earlier churches and buildings.

8.6.3 WALL COATINGS

While the survival of a decorative scheme under layers of historic plaster is of interest and worthy of further research, testing and conservation, preservation should be the priority. Without a roof or protective coating, exposing any remaining painted decoration will accelerate deterioration.

It is not clear whether the plaster could be considered of such quality and interest to justify the erection of a new roof or shelter as has been used previously by the OPW at Ardimmullivan, Clare Island and the Rock of Cashel

where medieval wall paintings and decorations have been found. Instead, the approach should be to ensure that the remaining plaster layers are stabilised to continue to provide protection of any surviving historic paintwork. Works carried out to the wall tops should be designed to reduce weathering and improve rainwater disposal, to protect the walls below. This will only slow down the rate of decay and will need to be replenished overtime. Accurate and high-quality photogrammetry of the walls can assist in identifying any areas of painting visible, while also recording the extent of wall plaster surviving. Unstable plaster could be consolidated with edge repairs in a lime-rich mortar to reduce water infiltration and the effects of weathering. Those areas already exposed could be protected with a separation layer and then coated over with lime plaster, reducing the rate of deterioration and allow for its future reversal.



89. Broken recumbent slabs close to entrance porch and bridge in background.



90. Broken recumbent slabs close to entrance porch and bridge in background.

8.6.4 BOUNDARY WALLS

The boundary walls enclosing the graveyard are likely to be in poor condition along the wall heads, where they are covered by thick ivy and shrubs. They are obscured from view by the pedestrian bridge, but their conservation will provide a more pleasing presentation of the graveyard along Church Street. It will also remove the risk of stone falling from the wall heads to the footpaths below.

Root systems of trees that have been removed will be retained in the ground and will require regular inspection over the years as these gradually

rot away leaving 'soft' areas that may be cause of concern. Any attempt to remove roots risks further destabilization of the walls and needs to be carefully assessed and a safe sequence of works devised.

8.6.5 MORTUARY MONUMENTS

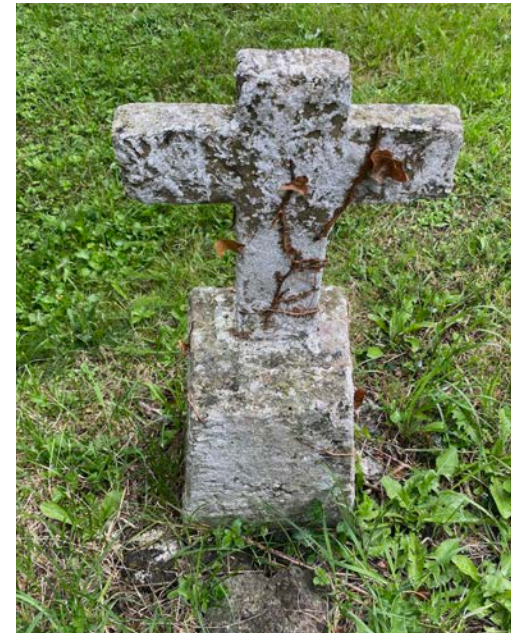
The monuments in the graveyard constitute a fine collection of late-eighteenth and early nineteenth century monumental art. Using the photographic surveys and the drone survey, drawings have now been prepared that record the precise layout of the monuments and their reference. These will be invaluable for their maintenance, interpretation and for further research.

In recent years programmes of conservation works have been undertaken by DCC to mortuary monuments at graveyards on James's Street and Donnybrook. Priority was given to structural repairs where monuments were at risk of loss or collapse. Where headstones have toppled, they were righted and set on a solid base. Where they had deflected, their stability was checked with a simple 'tip-test'. Where at immediate risk of collapse, headstones were righted to avoid risking injury to visitors and loss of historic fabric. Special care was taken with twentieth century gravemarkers of more modest materials, often with no inscription. Metal, concrete and timber crosses were labelled and conserved, and unmarked plots lined out by loose stones left undisturbed. The same attention to these memorials, should be taken at Finglas.

This survey has been carried out at Finglas as part of the preparation of the conservation management plan. A traffic-light methodology was used to

grade the complexity of the repairs in each case; red being used to identify monuments requiring specialist skills; amber used for those monuments where the defects were less complex; green used for repairs to monuments that were relatively simple, not urgent, or that trained and informed volunteers may be able to assist.

Of the 363 recorded mortuary monuments in the graveyard, 106 were found to require some repair. Altogether, sixteen mortuary monuments were needing complex repair works. Of these, the cluster of six table tombs and recumbent slabs in the vicinity of the stone porch were identified as being the first to address when funding allows, given their proximity to the main circulation route.



91. Handmade concrete cross.

TRAFFIC LIGHT SURVEY : CONSERVATION REPAIRS TO MEMORIALS

- 44 MEMORIALS : MINOR REPAIRS
- 50 MEMORIALS : SUBSTANTIAL REPAIRS
- 16 MEMORIALS : COMPLEX REPAIRS

363 TOTAL MEMORIALS
106 MEMORIALS REQUIRING REPAIR



92. Site layout showing traffic light analysis of memorial condition.



93. View of Nethercross showing damage, erosion and faint carvings.

8.7 NETHERCROSS

It is our recommendation that the Nethercross be conserved for the enjoyment of future generations. While its carvings have been recorded for posterity through laser scanning, further loss of surface detail may reduce its value as an artistic and cultural artefact. It is important that its fragility and vulnerability to damage and decay is appreciated fully when devising a conservation strategy, as a 'do nothing' scenario contains risks. Over time, the shaft will become even more slender, and may eventually topple or snap given the structural stresses. A survey by a structural engineer should be undertaken to assess its stability and bedding and evaluate the structural risks from its continued weathering outdoors.

It is important to acknowledge submissions from the community during our public consultation that the Nethercross should remain outdoors in its current location. We were conscious that the cross has attained significant cultural value in its position over 115 years that requires respect and understanding. Its current position close to the entrance gate, facing the centre of the village and the rising sun, all form part of its meaning to the residents of Finglas.

If it is decided that the best course of action would be to act to preserve the Nethercross from further degradation and loss, there are several case studies from Ireland and abroad to inform the process. Each site had a specific response to the problem of preserving the monumental stones, that also had a consideration of its broad cultural value, including its social and spiritual significance.



94. View of Moone cross relocated under new timber canopy in ruined church.

8.7.1 MOONE, CO KILDARE

As for Finglas, the high cross at Moone was disinterred in the nineteenth century yet stood for almost sixty years until the missing section of the shaft was uncovered and set into place. It now stands at an impressive 7m in height and is also constructed of Leinster granite. The vividness of its carvings serves as a contrast to Finglas, perhaps giving an indication of how much detail has been lost. In 2010, the OPW assessed that the risk to the surviving detail was too great to leave it outdoors. Being no longer in its primary location, they decided to protect the high cross at Moone from

further erosion by taking it into the ruined abbey church and installing a lightweight timber and polycarbonate roof with cable ties. In this way, the cross remains in an outdoor environment but sheltered from the extremes of rain and wind. Interpretation panels were installed to each side.

8.7.2 DURROW, CO OFFALY

Durrow Abbey was taken into state care in 2004, and the OPW decided that the impressive high cross at Durrow Abbey standing in the graveyard should be taken into the nearby eighteenth-century church. It is constructed in limestone, and stands at 3.6m, closer in height to Finglas



95. View of Durrow cross relocated into church.



96 & 97. View of replica cross being assembled and Downpatrick high cross relocated into museum and set on new base with new cap.

than Moone. Although its detail remained legible, it was suffering from erosion and its surfaces could not be considered stable and would have continued to deteriorate. The church had fallen into disrepair so was extensively refurbished to house the cross, with environmental monitoring installed. In this way, extremes of cold and exposure to wind are minimized, however indoor humidity needs to be avoided as it can result in organic growth that can alter the surface chemistry and cause decay.

8.7.3 DOWNPATRICK, CO DOWN

Commencing in 2013, Down County Museum undertook a project to bring the Market Cross, in granite and similar in scale to Finglas, from its position

in front of the cathedral into a purpose-built extension to their museum. The cross was not in its original location and had suffered extensively from erosion over the centuries. When photographed at the time of its re-erection at the end of the nineteenth century, considerable additional detail was evident in comparison to Finglas. Options to encase the high cross in a glass framework or erect a shelter in-situ were discounted as being insufficient. Instead the Department for Communities in Northern Ireland opted for a climate-controlled museum setting.

As part of its new display, they created a new base and cap to bring in closer to its original appearance. This intervention involves speculative restoration which is an unusual approach. They also produced a stone replica of the cross, created using laser scan and CNC cutting technology to form a new high cross in Mourne granite to stand in its place in front of the cathedral. This replica matched its appearance except for the variation in colour that derives from natural weathering.

8.7.4 CARNDONAGH, CO DONEGAL

Donagh Cross possibly dates to the seventh century and is one of the earliest examples of its kind, marking a transition from inscribed crosses on slabs to formed stone crosses in relief. Part of the Carndonagh ecclesiastical complex on the Inishowen Peninsula, the high cross had been separated from the church site by a road, which made it more vulnerable to accidental damage or vandalism. It was proposed to be removed to feature in the Rosc exhibition in Dublin in the 1960s, that was the cause of successful protests by the community. In recent years, its proximity to the road and the condition of its sandstone carved detail was again raised as a concern.



98. Donagh high cross, Co Donegal in its new setting.



99. The Market Cross in Kells, Co Meath.

The OPW arranged for the removal of the cross for conservation off-site at their depot in Dromohair, Co Leitrim. It was then reinstated at a new location on the opposite side of the road, flanked by its attendant stelae and sheltered under an oak canopy with lighting and hard landscaping.

8.7.5 KELLS, CO MEATH

As for the Donagh Cross, the Market Cross was relocated to be sheltered and protected from damage. It had stood at the end of Market Street where it marked the boundary of the ecclesiastical site but was possibly re-erected in the seventeenth century in a different orientation. In 2001 it was moved to the front of the former courthouse, then in use as a heritage centre. A replica high cross was placed inside the centre, and this is now closed to visitors and inaccessible. A lightweight steel and glass canopy was erected over the cross, now set with its current orientation.

8.8 OPTION ANALYSIS

Informed by the different options identified among the precedents, we carried out multi-criteria analysis (MCA) on the options available for the Nethercross. This method allows close comparison of a range of actions and their impact on the cultural heritage under different criteria so that the optimal approach can be identified. Scores from different specialisms or individuals can be aggregated and then entered into the matrix to identify a consensus choice. The options are as follows:

Do Nothing: Leave the high cross in its current location, while trimming trees and carrying out routine repairs in situ where necessary.

Shelter In-Situ: Leave the high cross in its current location but erect a shelter around the cross to provide protection from the weather. Note, there was no direct precedent for this approach presented, with Carndonagh and Kells being close but still involving relocation.

Relocate to Church & Shelter: Like Moone, move the high cross into the church ruin and shelter it beneath a new canopy. We also included the production and installation of a replica into its current location.

Relocate to New Location & Shelter: Similar to Downpatrick, move the high cross to a location off-site, perhaps a museum setting or shelter, with the installation of a replica in its current location.

NETHERCROSS - Multi-Criteria Analysis				
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	DO NOTHING	SHELTER IN-SITU	RELOCATE TO CHURCH & SHELTER W/ REPLICA LEFT IN PLACE	RELOCATE TO NEW LOCATION W/ REPLICA LEFT IN PLACE
CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC SETTING	9	6	6	6
LANDMARK & KEY VIEWS	9	7	9	9
MAINTENANCE & SECURITY	3	6	9	9
REVERSIBILITY	10	9	7	7
PRESENTATION & INTERPRETATION	4	5	8	6
ACCESSIBILITY	8	7	7	6
TOTAL SCORE 0-60	43	40	46	43

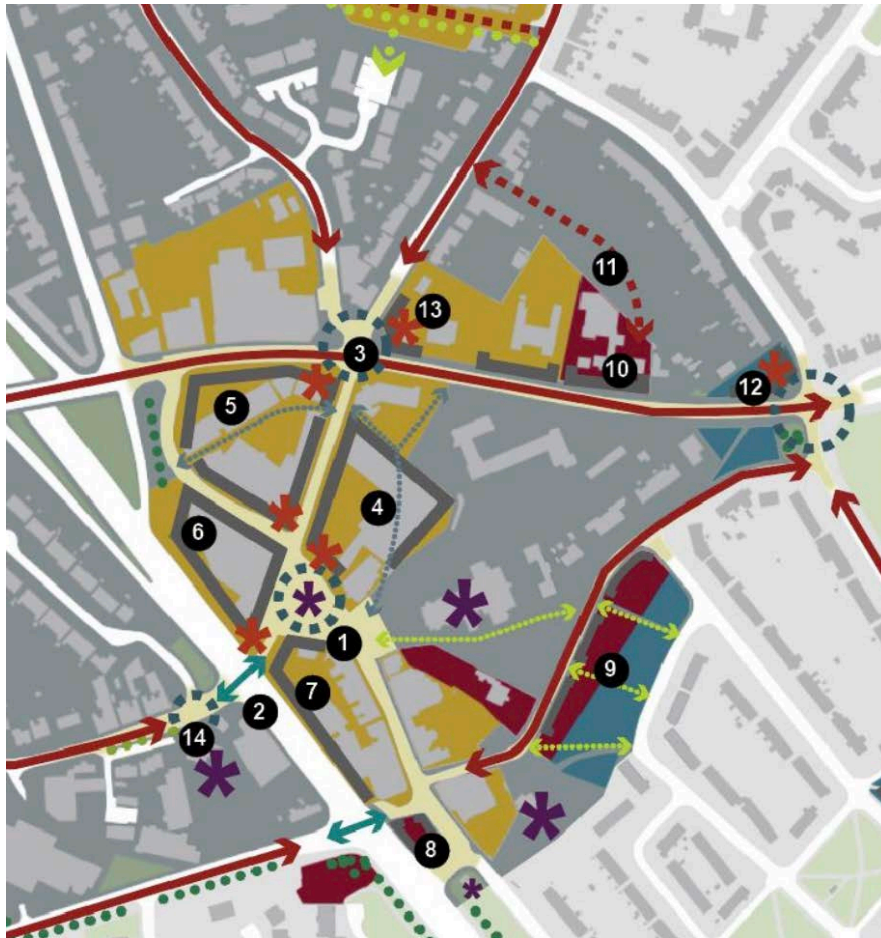
Scoring: 1-10, from low/detrimental to high/beneficial

100. MCA table showing scored options for the conservation of the Nethercross.

While each approach has positive and negative effects, a 'do nothing' approach was not preferred due to the risk of further degradation from natural weathering. 'Shelter in-situ', had the lowest score with little space for erecting a shelter, risking disturbance of memorials while not addressing issues of vandalism, tree encroachment or visual impact. The option of relocating the high cross to an unspecified new location remote from the graveyard scored the same as 'do nothing', due to the loss of the direct connection between the high cross and the graveyard. While the costliest option, the relocation of the Nethercross to the church scored highest; the main difference being the maintenance of its connection to the graveyard.

8.9 CONCLUSION

From our assessment of the precedents, the conservation strategy for Moone high cross would appear to have the closest relevance to Finglas. Conservation and adaptation of the medieval church ruin would allow it to be used as a new setting for the high cross within the graveyard. It would also have the advantage of helping to preserve the historic wall plaster. A shelter would improve security while protecting it from severe frost, rain, wind, and encroachment by trees while avoiding the risk of excessive drying out. We would consider the re-location of the high cross as a cultural act, with the intention of conserving it for future generations to enjoy. It would be opportune for interested stakeholders to undertake a visit Moone, Co Kildare. Further public consultation on the future of the high cross should inform next steps for its conservation. A potential project to relocate the high cross would take several years to achieve, involving extensive consultation, approvals from statutory bodies and fundraising.



101. Extract from Finglas Strategy showing church (14) public realm enhancement.

8.9 PUBLIC REALM & ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS

In recent decades, the setting of the graveyard and church has been altered by developments on adjacent sites. The pedestrian bridge that crosses the dual carriageway detracts from views towards the church and graveyard wall. In the recently published Finglas Strategy by DCC, identifies the issues of access and the detrimental impact of the pedestrian bridge on the setting of the ecclesiastical site. It notes that a proposed Bus Connects Bus Corridor along the dual carriageway would be an opportunity to provide an at-grade pedestrian crossing. It includes two objectives:

UD 2: Actively explore the removal of the Church Street pedestrian footbridge over Finglas Road in consultation with key stakeholders, in order to improve pedestrian permeability and enhance the setting of St Canice's heritage site.

UD 14: Create a new civic plaza on Church Street in order to improve the setting of the St Canice's National Monument, improve legibility and enhance the pedestrian connections to Finglas village.

The implementation of a new civic plaza would be a welcome opportunity to address the presentation of the ecclesiastical site, which might include proposals to improve universal access. This CMP should help to inform the urban designers during the design process. It would be important to ensure that the historic wall alignment would be conserved as part of any proposal.

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